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The Empire Strikes Back: Monsters From the Id
by Andrew Gordon

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I have argued that the fundamental appeal of *Star Wars* lies in its deliberately old-fashioned plot, which borrows elements from many genres of American popular fantasy and is unified by the structure of "the monomyth." *Star Wars* recounts the standard adventures of a mythic hero in terms comprehensible to a contemporary, mass American audience. It is fine popular art, all flashy surface, a blend of stunning, fast-moving visuals and pounding music whose impact is intended to be primarily visceral. In addition, a mythic framework unifies the action, and those deeper levels are there if one cares to look at them.

Empire, the continuation of Lucas' epic saga, reiterates Campbell's mythic round of Departure, Initiation, and Return. The hero, Luke Skywalker, symbolically dies and is reborn on the ice planet of Hoth, then wanders lost in the dark wood of the swamp planet of Dagobah until he is enlightened by the Jedi master, Yoda, who teaches the inscrutable ways of "the Force" (a kind of Zen filtered through the pop psychology of Est). In the climax, Luke is wounded in an apocalyptic battle with archvillain Darth Vader on the Cloud City of Bespin. All three environments are beautifully realized, with a scrupulous attention to color and detail. The Cloud City, with its graceful, lofty chambers flooded with sunshine and shades of roses, its art deco glass -- as well as its dark and menacing inner rooms -- rivals the Emerald City of Oz.

In *Empire*, however, Lucas and co-scriptwriters Leigh Brackett and Larry Kasdan have deepened and darkened the vision of *Star Wars*. As Lucas says, *Empire* is like the second act of a three-act play. As with most second acts, it deals with the problems of the characters...they grow and evolve, and things don't go very well for them. The story doesn't really end; it doesn't have a super-climax. Another difference is in the attitude of the films. In the first one the mood is joyous and triumphant, exciting and funny, all at the same time. The second one is exciting and funny too, but it's also sad; it's more of a tragedy than a triumph.

Empire is a rousing adventure story which is also genuinely disturbing. The heroes are in retreat from beginning to end: they accomplish only minor victories and suffer major defeats, reversing the pattern of the previous film. At the end of *Star Wars*, Luke believes himself to be following in the path of his deceased father, a noble Jedi knight. Ben Kenobi has passed on to Luke the totem of manhood, Luke's father's lightsaber, and Luke has proved himself worthy by defeating Vader and destroying the Death Star. But at the end of *Empire* Luke's identity and manhood have been shaken by the loss of his lightsaber and his right hand to Vader and by his discovery that the villain is his long-lost father.

What makes *Empire* disturbing is not only the mutilation (a symbolic castration) of the hero, but the fact that the concealed Oedipal meanings of the myth are made manifest. We realize now that Luke has been battling all along to kill his own father. The deliberate suggestion of "Death Father" in the name "Darth Vader" becomes transparently clear. The struggle to find his identity inevitably involves a mythic hero in patricide. Luke is the prophesied hero who will kill the King, a sort of clean-cut, cornfed, adolescent Oedipus feared by both Vader and The Emperor.

Gary Kurtz, producer of the series, says of *Empire*, "It's a story of him [Luke] growing up further...Luke's confrontation with Darth Vader is probably the most important element. *Empire* is a rites of passage film."2 All myth and fairy tales involve rites of passage, and so does *Star Wars*. The difference is that *Empire* stresses the price of independence from the parents, the pain caused by the necessary death of the old self in the course of initiation.

In *Empire*, the young hero's secure identity is turned topsy-turvy. This upheaval is suggested by numerous episodes in which Luke is literally upside down. First, near the beginning of the film, he is hung by his heels in a frozen cave by a snow monster; second, Yoda instructs Luke to use the Force by having him balance on his hands while levitating objects (Luke keeps losing his balance and toppling over); and finally, near the end of the film, after his defeat by Vader, he is once again upside down, hanging on for his life from the bottom of Cloud City.

Darth Vader, as Gerald Clarke notes, "is far more menacing in *Empire* than he was in *Star Wars*...With Vader dominating, perhaps even more than Lucas intended, *The Empire* finishes on a less satisfying and more ambiguous note."3 Vader is by now clearly Satanic: once noble but fallen from grace, a betrayer of his former master, a villain who wants to rule the universe and who tempts the hero with promises of infinite power. He strides through the action like a source of demonic energy, as unstoppable as the id. The climactic battle between Luke and Vader is more protracted and brutal than anything in *Star Wars*. It begins in the hellish, fiery-red carbon-freezing chamber, and leads ever downward, deeper and darker into the bowels of Cloud City, until it reaches the pitch of Gothic nightmare.

In the SF film *Forbidden Planet* (1956), it is revealed that the invisible creature killing off the Earth colonists on the planet Altair IV is actually a creation of the mind of the mysterious Dr. Morbius. Morbius has stumbled upon the superscience of the Krel (a dead race which once inhabited the planet), thereby increasing the power of his own mind, but also unwittingly unleashing a destructive "Monster from the Id." The mental science of the Krel is equivalent to what Lucas calls "the Force," a power which can be used for either good or evil. Darth Vader, the representative of the dark side of the Force, is Luke's father, but on another level he also represents Luke's own potential for evil, his own "Monster from the Id."

Empire suggests this intimate connection between Luke and Vader. First, Yoda tells Ben that Luke has "much anger in him, like his father." Later, Yoda asks Luke to abandon his weapons and enter a cave which is strong with the dark side of the Force. Luke asks him, "What's in there?" Yoda replies, "Only what you take with you." But Luke disregards the advice and enters the cave armed with his lightsaber. There he encounters and decapitates a vision of Darth Vader, only to see Vader's helmet dissolve to reveal -- Luke's face. What Luke battles in the cave, then, is his own hatred and violence (which cannot be defeated with more hatred), his Darth Vader, his dark side -- in other words, himself. He is not only Luke's father, but also what Luke could become if he gave in to the temptation of the dark side of the Force.

Irvin Kershner, director of *Empire*, said that in preparing for the film he read everything he could about fairy tales, beginning with Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*.4 Bettelheim claims that fairy tales are a voyage into the unconscious. The monster in such tales represents "the monster a child knows best and is more concerned with: the monster he feels or fears himself to be, and which also sometimes persecutes him." Fairy tales

"give these anxieties form and body and also show ways to overcome these monsters."[5] The victory in fairy tales is "not over others but over oneself and over villainy (mainly one's own, which is projected as the hero's antagonist)."[6] What such stories demonstrate is "the ego's conquering the dark forces of the id."[7] In *Empire* the dark side predominates; having unleashed those forces, Lucas has not yet shown how they may be successfully controlled. That task is left for the conclusion of the trilogy, *Return of the Jedi*. Our unease over the ambiguous conclusion of *Empire* is tempered only by the awareness that fairy tales must have happy endings.

One way in which *Empire* deflects our anxiety over the fate of Luke is by further developing the character of Han Solo and plunging him into more peril. The film is structured by parallel action: while Luke, accompanied by R2D2, undergoes his initiation on Dagobah, Solo, Leia, Chewbacca, and C3PO flee from the Empire's ships through an asteroid belt. The two plot lines converge in the climax on Cloud City.

Thus *Empire* is an epic with not one but two heroes, who are, in a sense, brother figures. Bettelheim mentions a series of fairy tales which feature the motif of two brothers who undergo separate adventures. The brothers usually stand for "incompatible aspects" of the human personality: "the striving for independence and self-assertion, and the opposite tendency, to remain safely home, tied to the parents."[8] Thus Solo acts out Luke's antisocial desires for total independence. Solo is always torn between being for himself and being for the group. At the end of *Star Wars*, he seems about to leave with his reward money; instead, he returns to rescue Luke. At the beginning of *Empire*, Solo is once again about to leave to pay off his debt to Jabba; once more, he sticks around to rescue Luke and later Leia.

Similarly, while Luke appears asexual, and seems to regard Leia as a mother figure, Solo woos her passionately. (One notices in *Empire* the red lights flashing in the background whenever Solo and Leia confront each other.)

Throughout *Empire*, Solo suffers on Luke's behalf. First, he risks his life when he rescues Luke on the ice planet. Next, he performs the job that Luke should be doing by protecting Leia in the escape from the Imperial assault. While Luke gets safely away to Dagobah, Solo is pursued by Imperial ships. Finally, Solo is tortured and subjected to a kind of living death in the carbon-freezing chamber. He is used by Vader as bait to entrap Luke; Vader even puts Solo into hibernation merely to test the process intended to be used on Luke. As a brother hero, Solo expresses some of Luke's repressed tendencies and suffers the punishment for these tendencies.

Empire, like all myths or fairy tales, deals with primal anxieties. In their parallel adventures, Luke and Solo are both faced with a basic, fairy-tale danger: the fear of being eaten alive. First, Luke is hung like a side of beef in a frozen-food locker by the ice creature, who one presumes is saving him as a snack. Next, Solo slits the belly of a dead beast of burden and shoves Luke inside to preserve him from the cold. (This is perhaps not so much being eaten as returning to the womb; right after this episode, Luke is healed by submersion in a bath resembling amniotic fluid.) Later, R2D2, who as Luke's faithful companion is an extension of Luke, is swallowed and comically spit out by a swamp creature; evidently the serpent finds him unpalatable. Meanwhile, Solo and his group take refuge by flying the *Millenium Falcon* into a cave on an asteroid. But the cave proves to be alive, and they escape at the last moment from the rapidly closing jaws and monstrous teeth of a gigantic space slug. Finally, the chamber in which Vader meditates on board his

ship resembles an enormous jaw with clenching metal teeth. Both Ben and Yoda warn Luke that the dark side can "consume" you if you are not careful.

Empire also plays on an anxiety related to the fear of being eaten: the fear of being dismembered. C3PO is dismantled into a heap of junk metal by Stormtroopers and only partially reassembled by Chewbacca. Luke decapitates his hallucination in the cave, and, in the climax of the film, loses his right hand to Vader's lightsaber. However, in each case the fear of dismemberment is allayed: both R2D2 and C3PO lost parts in the first film and had them replaced, and the plight of the disassembled C3PO in *Empire* starts out pathetic but turns comic. Luke at the end becomes part machine, outfitted with a bionic hand indistinguishable from the original.

Aside from the fears of being eaten or mutilated, *Empire* also exploits the fear of suffocation. Darth Vader still suffers from what sounds like a severe case of asthma. As in *Star Wars*, the punishment he usually inflicts is strangulation. And even Chewbacca tries to strangle Lando Calrissian after Lando has betrayed them.

Last of all, the film plays on the fear of falling. Luke crashlands twice, and later he overcomes Vader's Faustian temptation by plunging into an abyss, an endless fall which he miraculously survives.

It is possible that all these seemingly disparate fears -- of being swallowed or dismembered, of suffocating or falling -- are related on a deeper level to a more primal anxiety. *Empire* is a rite of passage film, and initiation rituals are intended to serve as a passage to manhood by symbolically tempting and defying castration (that is the purpose of the circumcision rites of primitive tribes).9 According to standard psychoanalytic theory, "anxiety over being eaten...may be a disguise for castration anxiety."10 And "sometimes a manifest fear of suffocation covers a repressed idea of castration."11 Furthermore, falling from a high place, connoting the danger of being killed, certainly represents punishment, probably most often punishment for wishes of killing; however, the sensation of falling itself simultaneously represents the sensations of sexual excitement which, having been blocked in their natural course, have acquired a painful and frightening character.12

In other words, given the overt Oedipal conflict in *Empire*, which climaxes with the hero's being mutilated when he attempts to kill his own father, it is not surprising that there should be a multiplication of frightening episodes intended to arouse and allay fears of emasculation. No wonder Han Solo's ship repeatedly fails to go into warp drive at crucial moments; it suffers a kind of mechanical impotence.

Another possible psychological explanation for the arousal of primal anxieties in the film is that they represent the fear of being abandoned by the mother, which may coexist with castration anxiety. There is nothing startling about such an interpretation. As *Empire* director Irvin Kershner says, "I feel that a film for children has to have certain qualities that children fear -- like the fear of abandonment, the fear of being totally alone, the fear that maybe your parents aren't your parents. All kinds of basic fears: that's the root stock that feeds all fairy tales."13 Throughout most of the film, Luke is abandoned by Leia, who has served as a mother figure to him. She is away being romanced by another man. Significantly, when he is hanging on in despair to the bottom of Cloud City after he has been wounded by Vader, he cries out for help to Ben and Leia, his substitute parents. Although the *Millenium Falcon* has already left without him, Leia telepathically hears Luke's cry and forces Lando to return and rescue him.

If we look further at the psychological meaning behind the various perils encountered in the movie, we find that "the longing to be rejoined with an object ot which one had yielded one's omnipotence...is unconsciously thought of as a kind of being eaten by a larger, more powerful object; it depends on individual circumstances whether this idea is met with positive longing or with anxiety."14 That is, the fear of being eaten alive can be connected to the longing to return to the womb, as in the episode where Luke is stuffed into the belly of a beast.

Bettelheim points out that fairy tales serve as psychological reassurance for their hearer. Because a child fears many of his own fantasies, "learning that others have the same or similar fantasies makes us feel that we are a part of humanity, and allays our fear that having such destructive ideas has put us beyond the common pale."15 The comforting appeal of fairy tales is amplified by the widescreen, shared experience of a film like *Star Wars*. "Attendance at *Star Wars* is largely a group phenomenon; few care to see it alone," *Star Wars* producer Gary Kurtz says. "Our plots might play well on TV but you just can't give a TV audience that 'theatre experience'; the group environment and the widescreen and soundtrack effects. That's one of the reasons that people went to see *Star Wars* so many times. They wanted that experience. One seven-year-old wrote me saying he liked 'living with these people in the theatre for two hours.' He wanted to do it over and over again. You can't do that on television."16

Just as children love to hear their favorite fairy tales recited over and over again, so audiences both young and old returned repeatedly to *Star Wars* for the reassurance of group indulgence in shared, widescreen fantasy.

Empire, like *Star Wars*, deals with the primal anxieties raised by standard mythic and fairy-tale material. Both films overcome anxiety to some extent by distancing the fantasied in a world long ago and far away, by using prototypical characters, by comic relief, and by offering the implicit fairy-tale reassurance that everything will come right in the end. Nevertheless, *Empire* is by no means as rassuring a spectacle as *Star Wars*, because it brings those anxieties nearer to the surface (where they may become too close for comfort) without satisfactorily resolving them. For that reason, although it is in many ways a more accomplished film, it was not as beloved by audiences as was *Star Wars*.

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Costumes in the Star Wars Saga
by Sarah

The costumes of *Star Wars* are an often overlooked but vital part of the saga. Recently an entire exhibition dedicated to them sprung up -- Dressing a Galaxy.1 The costumes (and their designer, Trisha Biggar) have recieved much praise, and for good reason.

Costumes can be (and are) used to add something to the characters. Colour plays a big part, and so does style. One costume can tell us about a character's "age, gender role, profession, social class [and] personality."2 *Star Wars* demonstrates this brilliantly.

Padmé Amidala's costumes are generally the first ones you notice -- they were hugely elaborate and utterly gorgeous. Her costumes as Queen were designed to be eyecatching, and they are also colourful, in royal colours: reds and purples and blacks. There often appears to be more of the costume than there is of her, and that was probably the desired effect -- Padmé is trapped in her role as Queen. Her costumes as a handmaiden are much less complex; she's not so weighed down by duty. Her handmaiden outfit on Tatooine, where she first meets her future husband, is blue and grey -- cool colours, in contrast to the bright ones worn by the Queen. In fact, there aren't many bright colours on Tatooine, most people, including Shmi, are wearing grey, simple outfits. As we've been told, it isn't a bright spot in the galaxy.

Padmé's battle costume at the end of the movie is also fairly simple (but still true to her planet's culture), as she has left the Senate in all its glamour to fight for her planet. She has made a concious desision to not be weighed down. And, when the battle is won, her white costume at the end of *The Phantom Menace* gives her an "angel-like" appearance -- fitting in with Anakin's first words to her: "Are you an angel?"

In *Attack of the Clones*, Padmé's costumes are, by comparision, slightly more simple and less regal. "Overall," says Natalie Portman, "what was different about the costumes in Episode II from those in Episode I was they were made to make me look more like a woman."3 Her black outfit worn in the fireplace scene is interesting -- she is telling Anakin he can't have her, but her costume seems to be saying the exact opposite. The colours of her costumes have also changed slightly: not much red or purple, instead blues and yellows, and white for her battle scene.

And by *Revenge of the Sith* the colours have muted: it's mostly blues and blacks. Her costumes also serve as disguises to hide her pregnancy: "In Episode I, she was the Queen, and she was wearing disguises. I once said she should be able to slip out of the back of the costume, and you'd never know she was gone. Ironically, in this one, she's back to wearing disguises. As well as now hiding this marriage to a Jedi, which is not allowed, she has to hide the fact that she's going to have babies. All of the costumes had to disguise these facts."4

The last costume Padmé wears while still alive is her sleeveless tan outfit. It looks a little like her battle outfit in *Attack of the Clones*, except it's not white -- white is the colour of innocence, and her association with Anakin has taken away her innocence. In fact, after the battle of Geonosis is over, she doesn't wear white at all. Even the wedding dress isn't quite white5 -- falling in love with Anakin has sealed her fate. Only at the very end of *Revenge of the Sith*, when she is dying, is she back in white; Anakin has gone from her, and she has refused his offer of power.

The last costume we actually see Padmé wearing -- the dress she has been put in for the funeral -- is a blue dress almost certainly supposed to bring to mind water and the ocean. "I think they call this the 'End Dress'," Natalie Portman said. "It's really really beautiful. I think Trisha wanted to get an ocean sense. Someone said to me that it was very 'Ophelia.' With the flowers and the hair, it does look like I'm drowning."[6] Anakin dies in fire and Padmé dies in water. In Chinese Taoist thought the element of water overcomes fire[7], just as Padmé's children will eventually "overcome" (from a certain point of view) Darth Vader.

Anakin's costume is fairly simple compared to those designed for Padmé -- colour-wise, he starts off as a young boy wearing grey and by *Attack of the Clones* he is wearing black, in contrast to Obi-Wan, who wears light colours all the way through. An early sign of the tension between them, perhaps -- the outfits the characters have chosen to wear don't match, so perhaps their personalities don't quite match, either. In *Revenge of the Sith* Anakin's costume has again changed slightly. "We changed his colors, and we darkened them all down, hinting at what he's going to become. Although he was quite dark brown before, there were some lighter aspects. This time, we've really taken shades of dark brown to give him a dark outline even though he's still a Jedi."[8] By the third act of *Revenge of the Sith*, Anakin looks much like Darth Vader -- who always wore black -- in everything apart from the mask.

Qui-Gon's costume is also fairly dark -- his cloak is about the same colour as Anakin's. A hint that he would have been a better master for Anakin? Possibly. It could also represent that he is out of step with the Jedi Council, and most of the other Jedi; the others, including Obi-Wan and Mace Windu, mostly have light brown cloaks.

Obi-Wan is one of the few characters who wears more or less the same sort of outfit all through the saga. It seems appropriate, considering that in every movie he is firmly on the side of the good.

Yoda's costume stays pretty much the same throughout the prequel trilogy, but during his duel with Darth Sidious in Episode III he loses his white Jedi cloak. Very possibly, the cloak symbolises his authority as head of the Jedi Council, which he now has lost. And come *The Empire Strikes Back*, he's no longer in Jedi clothes.

The Jedi, and therefore their costumes, were influenced by the Samurai. They all seem to wear roughly the same thing, with the same colours -- or the main Jedi characters do, at least. Some of the extras wear different things. Aayla Secura's Jedi costume shows off her stomach, for example, and Jocasta Nu's has patterns on it.

Jumping forward (or back?) a few years, we have Luke's costumes. Again, colour is important: he begins with a white costume in *A New Hope*, goes on to a grey one in *The Empire Strikes Back*, and finishes off with a black one. Luke's costume at the beginning of *Return of the Jedi* was specifically designed to bring to mind Darth Vader, but personally, I've always thought it looked a bit like the Emperor's costume, particularly with the hood covering the head. Either way, it's supposed to represent that Luke is nearing the edge.

Luke is still wearing his black costume at the end of *Return of the Jedi*, but by then it's fallen open to reveal some grey. Luke has been through a great deal, and will never go back to being how he was in *A New Hope*, but he's still remained who he used to be. A subtle touch, but a good one.

Palpatine is another one whose character journey is shown through his costume: through virtually all of *The Phantom Menace*, he's wearing a dark blue colour -- blue is the colour associated with Naboo, but we never see Palpatine wear light colours. In *Attack of the Clones* he mostly wears black and dark colours, matching up with Anakin's dark brown Jedi costume. In *Revenge of the Sith* he's still wearing black, but wearing red as well, especially in the fighting scenes; he's more aggressive in his plans now. (Red is generally the colour of aggression in *Star Wars*, hence why all the Sith have red lightsabres.) In all three of those movies, we also see him in his black cloak -- in that, his eyes are covered and we can barely see his face. It's a costume designed for stealth. Appropriate considering Palpatine worked in the shadows, kept himself hidden from suspicion, and didn't reveal his plans until it was too late. And as Emperor, he is always in his black cloak -- he's pure evil by this point.

Every costume in *Star Wars* has something to say -- whether it's something about the character or about the planet they hail from. Leia's white dress represents purity[9], and the costumes of the various Queens tell us plenty about culture on Naboo. This goes for extras as well as main characters; a great many of the people walking about in the background have their own costume, and therefore their own planet, environment, and social class. The costumes may go fairly unnoticed, what with so many other things going on, but they help make the *Star Wars* galaxy a more real one, and a place populated with real people and societies.

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The Romance of Anakin and Padmé
by Krista M. Sprecher (jedi-scholar)

n the preface to her study of medieval romance, Andrea Hopkins notes that the modern equivalent of a medieval romance is *Star Wars*, explaining the how the features of *Star Wars* correlate. She claims that romance "generally takes place in a privileged world somewhere between the folk-tale, the fairy story, and the novel. Romances tells stories which typically examine the conduct of their characters in relation to an ideal, and very often in doing so acknowledge the imperfections of contemporary reality. They are characteristically preoccupied with particular idealisms: most often 'the idealised sexual relationship which we call romantic love' and 'the idealised integrity which we call honor'" (2). She then explains how *Star Wars* meets the criteria for romance, noting how "its heroes and heroines are engaged in a quest to restore freedom to their world and to rid it of unjust, oppressive tyrants. In addition, the young untried hero Luke Skywalker...must prove himself by many difficult tests, including lonely journeys through hostile territories and single combats against opponents of superhuman strength...One could take the analogy even further and compare the films with a certain type of medieval romance. The *Star Wars* films are very popular, and also very long. The warrior elite calls themselves 'Knights,' there are many monstrous beasts, and there is much use of magic" (3-4).

Because Hopkins' analysis was written in 1990, her work obviously does not include the prequel trilogy, and, as this discussion will prove, the prequel trilogy can also be compared with medieval romance. But what is a Romance and what are its features? A standard literary definition of Romance states that it is "a tale of adventure in which knights, kings, or distressed ladies motivated by love, religious faith, or the mere desire for adventure, are the chief figures"(Harmon 303). But this is a basic definition at best. Northup Frye suggests that Romance belongs to the mythos of summer and contains a six-part quest structure that essentially parallels the cycle of human life (198). Other scholars, as Hopkins also notes, attempt to define romance in relation to epic, but that is often futile because the lines between epic and romance are very blurry, especially in medieval literature (6-8). Instead, the solution she proposes is that "there are two kinds of romances, and that theses can generally be distinguished from each other by the material on which they are based, or the treatment of that material. One tends to be tragic, is usually long, and is based upon material either from pagan, classical stories or from more recent Dark Age history and epic. The other kind is comic, usually short, and is based on later material" (10). She also asserts that there are exceptions to this classification and that romance can encompass such matters as chivalry, love, battle, hagiography, and religious instruction (13).

Despite the often confused definitions of romance, the entire *Star Wars* saga does fall within the parameters outlined. The adventurous hero-quest tone of the original trilogy is one type of romance while the tragic love of the prequel trilogy is another. The all-encompassing love of Anakin Skywalker and Padmé Amidala resembles some of the most popular romances of the Middle Ages -- the stories of ill-favored lovers like Lancelot and Guinevere, Troilus and Criseyde, and Tristan and Isolde. The romance of Anakin and Padmé belongs to this wonderfully rich literary heritage and exploring the connection between the love story of *Star Wars* and its medieval predecessors is the aim of this discussion.

Before examining these connections, it is important to state that George Lucas did not re-tell any one of these stories in his saga. Instead, it is more likely that he incorporated

aspects of these romances as well as the entire courtly love tradition into Anakin and Padmé's love story. This is a crucial distinction because there are those who require concrete similarities as proof of influence. However, *Star Wars* usually eludes such interpretations. Throughout the saga, Lucas has defied conventions by choosing to cull from a wide variety of sources, themes, ideas, and motifs to create his myth. Some scholars like Frye suggest that this is precisely what happens as myth evolves; it is always adaptive (Frye 51). *Star Wars* can be seen as evidence of their theories in action. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid a strict interpretive stance, and, instead, adopt a flexible position to analyze the nuances in the *Star Wars* mythos. This is the approach employed here. Because a thorough analysis of the connections between Anakin and Padmé's love story and medieval romance requires a detailed study, this essay will be divided into three parts. The first will examine the concept of courtly love in relation to the fireplace scene, the second will explore the most significant medieval romances in relation to Anakin and Padmé' s tragic love, and the third will explain the connection between all of the medieval romance elements and the love story of *Star Wars*.

I. The Fireplace Scene and Courtly Love

It is clear that Lucas' team had courtly love in mind when they developed the love story in *Attack of the Clones*. Producer Rick McCallum says as much in one of the DVD featurettes, stating, "it's more like courtly love" (McCallum). However, that explanation has not abated the slew of criticism leveled at *Clones* for its supposedly clunky dialogue and painful troth-plighting, especially in the fireplace scene. However, the fireplace scene isn't as badly constructed as one might think. Instead, it falls completely within the courtly tradition. To see this connection, it is necessary to survey some courtly literature, and then highlight the parallels between the courtly tradition and Anakin and Padmé's love story.

A literary definition of courtly love states that it is a "philosophy of love and code of lovemaking that flourished in chivalric times" (Harmon 120), and that "falling in love is accompanied by great emotional disturbances; the bewildered lover exhibits such 'symptoms' as pallor, trembling, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, sighing, and weeping. He agonizes over his condition and indulges in endless self-questioning and reflections on the nature of love and his own wretched state. His condition improves when he is accepted, and he is inspired by his love to great deeds. He and his lady pledge each other to secrecy, and they must remain faithful in spite of all obstacles" (Harmon 121). In her study of courtly love, Hopkins claims that *fin' amor* (courtly love) developed in the court culture of southern France. Here, minstrels or bards called troubadours sang the praises of love (10-13). She notes that "they wrote about love, and about the women they loved. In the poetry of the troubadours, love was often celebrated in quasi-religious terms, with the beloved woman being venerated as an object of worship, and much emphasis on the torments suffered by the lover" (11). Over time, the concept of courtly love became so well-defined that it engendered a famous rule book, Andreas Capellanus' *Art of Courtly Love*, as well as numerous poems and tales.

Capellanus' study is often considered the medieval response to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. Unlike Ovid, whose rule book resembles an etiquette manual with practical advice about hygiene and similar matters, Capellanus' work explores the condition and nature of love itself. Although some scholars suggest that Capellanus' work was intended to be a parody of courtly love, it was still extremely influential and often taken quite seriously if one judges its reception by literary references (Hopkins, 14-15). The work is composed of three books, two of which lay out the rules of courtly love, and a third which retracts them, just

as Chaucer retracts the “tales of Canterbury, thilke sownen into synne.“ (1086). But, even with the retraction, the precepts outlined in Capellanus can be used to explore the nature of Anakin and Padmé’s love story.

Capellanus defines love as "a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the others embrace" (28). The effect upon the male is staggering, "for when a man sees some woman fit for love and shaped according to his taste, he begins at once to lust after her in his heart; then he comes to a fuller meditation" (29). This leads to action in that "he begins to plan how he may find favor with her, and he begins to seek a place and a time opportune for talking" (29). But, if the love is unfulfilled, "it increases beyond all measure and drives the lovers to lamenting their terrible torments, because 'we strive for what is forbidden and always want what is denied us'" (35). After further elaboration, Capellanus summarizes his findings in thirty-one rules. These constitute the core beliefs of the courtly love tradition. Several are noted here, even though the bulk of them will be explored in the last section of this discussion. They are:

II. He who is not jealous cannot love.
III. No one can be bound by a double love.
IV. It is well-known that love is always increasing or decreasing.
IX. No one can love unless he is impelled by the persuasion of love.
X. Love is always a stranger in the home of avarice.
XII. A true lover does not desire to embrace in love anyone except his beloved.
XIII. When made public love rarely endures.
XV. Every lover turns pale in the presence of his beloved.
XVI. When a lover catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates.
XIX. If love diminishes, it quickly fails and rarely revives.
XX. A man in love is always apprehensive.
XXII. Jealousy, and therefore love, are increased when one suspects his beloved.
XXIII. He whom the thought of love vexes eats and sleeps very little.
XXIV. Every act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved.
XXVII. A lover can never have enough of the solaces of his beloved.
XXVIII. A slight presumption causes a lover to suspect his beloved.
XXIX. A man who is vexed by too much passion usually does not love.
XXX. A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thoughts of his love. (184-6)

Moreover, Capellanus gives specific examples of these principles in action in a series of debates between men and women. Some of these exchanges are worth commentary because of their subject matter and style. Consider the following passages:

(This selection is taken from a debate between a man of the middle class and a woman of the nobility.)

The man says, "the sight of your face so terrifies my spirit and disturbs my mind that I completely forget even those things I have carefully thought out in my mind. With reason, therefore, I tried to hide my grief, but the more I sought to cover up my wound, the more the pain of it increased. Yet the wound did remain hidden so long as the pain of it was not too much for me; but after I was overcome by the strength of it, by its mighty power it forced me to ask for great things and to seek a cure for my ever-present pain. You are the cause of my suffering and the cure for my mortal pain, for you hold both my life and my

death shut up in your hand. If you will grant what I ask, you will give me back the life I have lost and much solace in living, but if you deny me, my life will be a torment to me, and that is worse than if I met with sudden death; for a quick death would be preferable to suffering continually such terrible torture. I cannot tell you all the things my soul thinks should be told, but God knows the words that the dumb man wishes to speak" (45-6).

(This selection is taken from a debate between a nobleman and a noblewoman.)

The man says, "Although in the flesh I rarely come into your presence, in heart and spirit I never depart from it, for the continual thought which I have of you makes me present with you very often and makes me see constantly with the eyes of the heart that treasure about which all my attention turns, and it brings me both pains and many solaces" (69).

(This selection is taken from a debate between a nobleman and a middle-class woman.)

The woman says, "What you say is reasonable enough if my heart would submit to my will. It would be my will to do what you propose, but my heart absolutely forbids and wholly dissuades me from doing what I desire with all my will. Therefore, since my heart forbids me to love, tell me, I pray you, which should I follow -- my heart or my head" (89).

Now consider this medieval German poem from Dietmar Von Aist which is a dialogue between a lady and a knight (note -- translation is my own).

"Are you sleeping, my peaceful beloved?
Sadly, someone will wake us soon
A little bird has landed on the linden tree."

"I was very peacefully asleep
And now, dear one, you call the alarm.
Love without sorrow does not exist
My Sweetheart, I will do anything that you ask"

The woman began to cry
"You will ride off and leave me alone
When will you come back to me again?
Alas, you will collect my joy and take it away with you" (11)

Now examine this long passage from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Struck by Cupid's arrow at the sight of Criseyde, Troilus is overcome with longing and desire for Criseyde, and arranges, with the help of her uncle Pandarus, to plead his case before her in person.

In chaunged vois, right for verray drede,
With vois ek quook, and therto his manere
Goodly abaist, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, unto Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look down cast and humble iyolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, "mercy, mercy swete herte!"

And stynte a while, and whan he myghte out brynge,
The next word was, "God woot, for I have,
A ferforthly as I have konnynge,

Ben youres al, God so my soule save
And shal til that I, woeful wight, be grave!
And though I dar, ne kan, unto yow pleyne,
Iwis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne

"Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wif,
I may out brynge, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owen lif
Right soone, I trowe, and do your herte an ese,
If with my deth youre wrethe may apese.
But syn that ye han herd me somewhat seye,
Now recche I nevre how soone that I deye."

Therewith his manly sorwe to biholde
It myghte han mad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare wep as he to water wolde,
And poked ever his nece new and newe,
And seyde, "Wo bygon ben hertes trewe!
For love of God, make of this thing an ende,
Or sle us both at ones er ye wende."

"I, what? quod she, "by God and by my trouthe,
I not nat what ye wilne that I seye."
"I what?" quod he, "That ye han on hym routhe
For Goddes love, and doth hym nought to deye!"
"Now than thus, "quod she, "I wolde hym preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente.
Ye wist I nevere wel what that he mente"

"What that I mene, O swete herte deere?"
Quod Troilus, " O goodly, fresshe free,
That with the stremes of youre eyen cleere
You woulde somtyme frendly on me see,
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
Withouten braunche of vice in any wise,
In trouth alwey to don yow my servise,

"As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my writ and al my diligence;
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under yowre yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deth, if that I breke youre defence:
And that ye deigne me so muchel honoure
Me to comanden aught in any houre;

"And I to be youre--verray, humble, trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient
And evere mo desrien freesly newe
To serve, and ben ylike diligent
And with good herte al hooly youre talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte;
Lo this mene I, myn owen swerte herte." (92-147)

Now compare these to the exchange between Anakin and Padmé in the fireplace scene of *Attack of the Clones*.

“Ever since I met you all those years ago, not a day has gone by when I haven’t thought of you. And now that I’m with you again, I'm in agony. The closer I get to you, the worse it gets. The thought of not being with you...I can’t breathe. I’m haunted by the kiss that you should never have given me. My heart is beating, hoping that that kiss will not become a scar. You are in my very soul, tormenting me. What can I do? I will do anything that you ask. If you are suffering as much as I am, please tell me.”

“I can’t, we can’t -- it’s just not possible.”

“Anything is possible, Padmé. Listen to me.”

“No, you listen to me. We live in a real world. Come back to it. You’re studying to become a Jedi and I'm...I’m a senator. If you follow your thoughts through to conclusion, it will lead us to a place that we cannot go, regardless of the way we feel about each other.”

“Then you do feel something.”

"I will not let you give up your future for me."

"You're asking me to be rational, and that is something that I know that I cannot do. Believe me, I wish I could just wish away my feelings, but I can't."

“I will not give into this.”

“Well, you know, it wouldn't have to be that way. We could keep it a secret.”

“We would be living a lie. One we couldn't keep even if we wanted to.

"I couldn't live like that. Could you Anakin, could you live like that?”

“No, you’re right, it would destroy us.”

Not only does this scene parallel the medieval passages, it also hits upon several of Cappelanus’s rules of love. Seen in relationship to these passages, the fireplace scene doesn't seem quite as awkward or sappy as the common critical complaints would suggest. It is strange to modern ears and sensibilities, but it is a completely conventional depiction of courtly love. Several features stand out. The first is that, like the scenarios presented by Capellanus, the exchange between Anakin and Padmé takes the form of a debate in which the man is trying to persuade the woman to succumb to his advances. This is commonly seen in medieval romances as well as in poetry. Moreover, the debates are usually highly stylized, showing evidence of their relationship to medieval rhetoric. In romantic debates, the male presents his case from several different angles, hoping to trip the woman up on one of them, thereby winning the debate and her consent.

This is precisely the tactic Anakin employs. First, he illustrates the depth of his feelings for her with sentiments like, "I can't bear the thought of not being with you," and, like the nobleman in the second Capellanus selection ("for the continual thought which I have of you makes me present with you very often") tells her that he has never stopped thinking

about her with "not a day has gone by when I haven't thought about you." Anakin tries to manipulate her into a response, "If you're suffering as much as I am, please tell me," and to convince her that she should acquiesce with, "Listen to me Padmé." Second, like Troilus, Anakin tries to appeal to Padmé's emotions, revealing his love for her, and explaining how much he is suffering (I'm in agony," "I can't breathe"). Similarly, Troilus begs for mercy ("mercy, mercy, swete herte"), and even refers to death ("deth," "grave," "deye") several times, implying that if his love is unfulfilled, it will be his undoing.

This is also the strategy employed by the man in the first Capellanus selection who says that the woman is the cause of his "suffering" and that if she will "grant what I ask, you will give me back the life I have lost and much solace in living, but if you deny me, my life will be a torment to me, and that is worse than if I met with sudden death" (45-46). Third, Anakin ends his initial emotional appeal with a commitment, "I will do whatever you ask," which mirrors the response given by the knight in Von Aist's poem ("I will do whatever you ask") and Troilus' vow to be loyal and faithful to Criseyde alone ("And I to ben youre--verray, humble, trewe). Lastly, he suggests that they could keep their love a secret which follows Capellanus' pronouncement that "when made public, love rarely endures," and Troilus' promise to keep his love "secret."

Padmé's speech follows the same pattern of the woman in the third Capellanus sequence in which the woman asks, "tell me, I pray you, which I should follow -- my heart or my head." Although Padmé does not use these words, her forceful retort, "we live in a real world, come back to it," after the more regretfully spoken, "I can't, we can't, it's just not possible," implies the same sort of conflict between head and heart. This is even more apparent, when one juxtaposes the sentences, "You're studying to be a Jedi and I'm...I'm a senator" with "it will lead us to a place we cannot go regardless of the way we feel about each other." Like the woman in the Capellanus passage, Padmé is also torn between heart and head. The difference between these women is one of status. Padmé is not a lower-class woman responding to the advances of a higher class man, which is why the tone is slightly different in the Capellanus passage, but the conflict is still the same.

Many more passages from medieval literature could be examined and the results would be pretty much the same. Far from being isolated examples, these passages typify the sort of exchanges and sentiments one finds in medieval literature. The courtly tradition is clearly a prominent feature of medieval literature. But why did Lucas choose to reference courtly love in the prequel trilogy? Perhaps, the answer can be found in Hopkins' assertion that courtly love "permanently influenced our culture and society, and the way we think about romantic love" (10). Or maybe, the answer lies in the fact that courtly love is a key element of the great romances of the Middle Ages -- those tales of love won and lost that have captivated readers for generations. No matter the reason, the fireplace scene definitely belongs to the realm of courtly love.

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Issue 3

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The Queen of Naboo and The Lion of Judah:
An Historical Parallel

by lazypadawan

One of the more dramatic moments in *The Phantom Menace* was Queen Amidala's plea to the Galactic Senate to help the conquered planet Naboo. The young monarch demanded the Senate force the Trade Federation to withdraw its forces, but the Senate is soon mired in procedure and accusations that the Queen's allegations are untrue. The Supreme Chancellor loses control of the situation and little is accomplished. The Galactic Senate is rife with corruption and stuck on procedure. The Supreme Chancellor has little moral authority to lead due to an unnamed scandal.

It is a familiar scene to *Star Wars* fans, but few know that a similar incident occurred less than a century ago on our own planet. In 1936, the monarch of a conquered nation appealed not to a Galactic Senate, but to the League of Nations for help (1). That monarch was Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia (1892-1975) (2).

Selassie was born Tafari Makonnen in the Harar province of Ethiopia. Unlike Amidala, he was born into royalty. He claimed to have been a direct descendent of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. His father was governor of Harar and his grandmother was the aunt of Emperor Melenik II. Like Amidala, Tafari assumed his first title at a young age, 13, but assumed his first governorship when he was older and did not finally become Emperor until November 2, 1930 after a great deal of power struggle and intrigue (3). It was then that Tafari adopted his baptismal name, Haile Selassie, just as Padmé Naberrie adopted the name Amidala once she took the throne (4). Selassie had many titles, one of which lives on to this day, the Lion of Judah (5).

Star Wars fans know that the pacifist Naboo were no match for the wealthy and heavily-armed Trade Federation, with its battle droids, tanks, and droid starfighters. Amidala was initially captured, then forced to flee the planet. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia from its colonies in neighboring Eritrea and Somalia. Selassie attempted to fight off the invaders, but the better-armed Italians defeated the Ethiopian army after seven months, and Selassie was forced to flee with his family to Jerusalem (6).

Just as the young queen chose to go to Coruscant, after a detour on Tatooine, to appeal to the Senate, Selassie traveled to Geneva, Switzerland to address the League of Nations in June of 1936. Founded after the end of World War I, the League of Nations was intended to promote diplomacy between countries and avoid the secret alliances that brought several countries into World War I. The League of Nations however, was notoriously ineffective and did little to stop the rise of Nazism and fascism in Europe prior to World War II. It had no military of its own, so its only method of dealing with violations was with sanctions that it could not enforce. League members that did have a military were reluctant to use their own armies, particularly during the pacifist mood of the post-World War I era (7). The League of Nations failed to enforce an embargo on Italian arms and while it condemned the invasion of Ethiopia, no action was taken, not even when chemical weapons had been used on the Ethiopians (8). The Galactic Senate did not have a military at the time of *The Phantom Menace*. It seemed to rely mostly on diplomacy and proclamations in these types of instances, yet aside from the Jedi, it had no way of using force to deal with violations. It also seemed to be reluctant to take any sort of action, especially against the powerful.

Amidala's appeal to the Galactic Senate was interrupted by the Trade Federation's representatives and their allies, who wanted a committee investigation instead of immediate action. Selassie had to endure something similar when the President of the Assembly of the League of Nations announced him: "the large number of Italian journalists in the galleries erupted in loud shouts, whistles and catcalls, stamping their feet and clapping their hands. As it turned out, they had earlier been issued whistles by the Italian foreign minister (and Mussolini's son-in-law) Count Galeazzo Ciano (9)." Although Amidala's address in the film was much shorter than Selassie's, the idea is the same: demanding justice and enforcement of the values the League of Nations -- or the Senate -- is supposed to uphold. Selassie told the assembly, "I ask the fifty-two nations, who have given the Ethiopian people a promise to help them in their resistance to the aggressor, what are they willing to do for Ethiopia? And the great Powers who have promised the guarantee of collective security to small States on whom weighs the threat that they may one day suffer the fate of Ethiopia, I ask what measures do you intend to take (10)?"

Compare that with "I have come before you to resolve this attack on our sovereignty now. I was not elected to watch my people suffer and die while you discuss this in a committee."

Just as Amidala's pleas were largely unheard and bureaucracy prevented any immediate action against the Trade Federation, the League of Nations imposed ineffectual trade sanctions against Italy (11), while Britain and France actually recognized Italian possession of Ethiopia (12). Italy withdrew from the League of Nations in 1937, as did its allies Germany in 1933 and Japan in 1932, making any kind of action against the Italians impossible (13). Nevertheless, Selassie's speech earned worldwide attention and admiration (14). "The speech is remembered more than the aggression itself (15)."

Selassie spent the next few years in exile in Britain unsuccessfully trying to bring attention to Ethiopia's plight. He suffered personal tragedy as family members were incarcerated and died. However, Italy's entry in the war on the side of Germany in 1940 helped turn the tide (16). Britain entered into an alliance with Selassie, just as Amidala entered into an alliance with the Gungans and informally, with her two Jedi protectors and young Anakin Skywalker. Both exiled monarchs returned to drive out the invaders along with their new allies. Selassie re-entered Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on May 5, 1941 and fighting ended in 1942; quite a bit longer than it took for Amidala and her allies to defeat the Trade Federation (17).

In the grander scheme of galactic politics, the invasion of Naboo and the subsequent defeat of the Trade Federation were small events. Of course they later on had greater implications for the galaxy, but at the time, no one knew how far reaching those events would be. Amidala was a heroine to the Naboo and she forged a permanent partnership between the humans and the Gungans. Even though the invasion of Ethiopia was a pretext to the Axis powers staking out their regions of domination, Italy was still the weakest of the Axis nations: "the Allies never viewed (Italy) as much more than a nuisance (18)." Nevertheless, Selassie was a hero worldwide, especially to the people of Africa. "To the Ethiopians, it was as much a moral victory as a military one (19)."

Selassie reigned longer afterwards than the elected Queen of Naboo, deposed by a Marxist coup in 1974 and then dying on August 28, 1975 -- some believed he had been killed in his sleep (20). However, Selassie's legend lives on. His heroism during World War II caused some to believe he was God incarnate, the followers of which came to be known as Rastafarians (the former Tafari Makkonen was known as "Ras Tafari" before

taking the throne) (21). Selassie himself was a lifelong Ethiopian Orthodox Christian and never professed any divine origin (22).

The League of Nations' handling of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia is remembered as one of that body's greatest failures. Most of its failures in fact, were related to the aggression of the Axis powers in the 1930s. The League was plagued by a small membership with many nations entering then withdrawing, its Eurocentric outlook, the mistrust of the European center-right, and the non-participation of the United States. The League was whittled down to a skeleton staff at the beginning of World War II, when it was clear it failed in its mission to prevent war. A few of its agencies survived as part of the subsequent United Nations (23). The Galactic Senate's failures also preceded its eventual demise. The Senate was eventually brought under control of the Empire, its status reduced to a powerless body until it was eliminated completely during the time of *A New Hope*.

One cannot definitively prove George Lucas was inspired by Selassie's story while creating this particular story arc for *The Phantom Menace*, but the parallels are at times uncanny. Both Emperor Selassie and Queen Amidala could be summed up with this: "Even when the foe is truly formidable, courage has a psychological side that has little to do with combat or physical victory. One may seem defeated materially without being defeated morally (24)." The Lion of Judah displayed great courage in the face of impossible odds and indifference, as did a young queen he may have inadvertently inspired decades after his death.

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Issue 4

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"For what shall it profit a man?" – The Conflict between the Physical and the Spiritual in *Star Wars*
by Matril

It has often been observed that the *Star Wars* films present a sort of amalgamated religion, drawing on multiple traditions to formulate a generic system of beliefs and ideals that most any religious person can relate to. Lucas has stated that, "I wanted it to have a strong moral basis designed to teach young people and give them a perspective" (Galaxy, 190), as well as acknowledging, "I've always been curious, academically, about organized religion" (ibid). The result of this infusion of shared religious notions is that *Star* Wars can be viewed through the lens of many religions, with illuminating results. In this essay I intend to explore a certain aspect of the saga which is common to multiple faiths, via a verse found in the Christian scripture of the New Testament. The particular notion is part of Christian doctrine, but may be familiar to any number of traditions.

The verse I have chosen declares, in the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39, NT). At first glance it may appear self-contradictory, but the key to understanding this declaration is a realization that there are two meanings of "life" at use here. Simply speaking, the first refers to the physical, literal life that ends upon death; the second refers to the spiritual, intangible aspects of life that, in Christian belief and others, cannot be lost through death or other traumas. What, then, is Jesus saying? It would appear that any attempt to hold desperately to life and its physical trappings, while neglecting the more lasting spiritual gains, will result in an ironic loss of everything desired or important. On the other hand, the ability to let go of worldly desires and gains will allow the attainment of that which is far more valuable. A similar sentiment is expressed eloquently in another statement by Jesus: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36, NT) The pain of such a loss is evident in the mournful tone of this question.

This curious apparent paradox is not at all an uncommon theme in other religions; as one example, the second-century teacher, Rabbi Jacob, summed up the contradiction thusly: "One hour of repentance and good deeds in this life is better than the whole life of the World to Come but one hour of spiritual bliss in the World to Come is better than the whole of this life" (Jewish 232-3). Side-by-side we see the conflicting physical and spiritual life, and the lasting consequences on focusing on one or the other. In another religion, the words of Krishna explain that upon death a "person frees himself from these limbs just as a mango, or a fig, or a berry, releases itself from its bond; and he hastens again, according to the entrance a place of origin, back to life," however, as Joseph Campbell goes on to explain, "the power to make a full transit back through the epochs of emanation depends on the character of the man when he was alive" (Campbell 366-7). Thus, true life does not end with physical death, but it must be achieved by a certain level of spirituality.

This theme plays out intriguingly in the *Star Wars* saga, as multiple characters struggle with the pulls of ephemeral physical pursuits and desires on the one hand, and the quest for spiritual betterment on the other. Perhaps the most compelling examples are seen in the father and son pair of Anakin and Luke Skywalker. A comparison and contrast of their struggles will be presented in light of this verse, exploring Anakin's fall, Luke's triumph over the temptation to follow a similar path, and the subsequent redemption of his father.

At the beginning of the saga, we are introduced to the character of Anakin as a child. He is practically the epitome of good-natured innocence and a guileless desire to help others.

The party from Naboo enters Watto's shop as complete strangers to him, and yet he greets them in a friendly manner, offers them shelter, and ultimately provides the means to repair their ship and continue their mission, at great risk to himself (though it could be argued that his love of flying at high-speeds renders his service not entirely selfless). This is not to claim that Anakin is presented as a perfect human; he has his flaws and fears. His plaintive words to his mother, "I don't want things to change," quietly hint at the troubles he will have later. However, in terms of his relationship to the physical and spiritual spheres, his childhood is largely spent in giving of himself, helping others, and taking little consideration for selfish concerns. Perhaps a large reason for this attitude is the way his mother has raised him, for Anakin reminds her at one point, "You say the biggest problem in this universe is nobody helps each other." Thanks to Shmi's upbringing, Anakin has a reflexive reaction to serve others and try to put things right. This is often the case with children, but it is worth noting where Anakin's journey begins.

Ten years later, during which Anakin has spent his adolescence receiving Jedi training from Obi-Wan, we begin to note the widening conflict of physical versus spiritual. It is interesting to note that for Anakin, his ties to the non-spiritual have little to do with actual possessions, riches or literal physical acquisitions. After all, he has never had the opportunity to gain a taste for such things, either as a slave or as an ascetically trained Jedi. Instead, Anakin's hold on the physical world is concerned with his relationships with those he loves. As mentioned earlier, the first sense of "life," the physical, is that of something which can be lost and ultimately ends with death. And it is clear that Anakin has come to think of the death of loved ones as a dire and dreaded event, perhaps worse than anything else. "I don't want things to change," can be translated to "I don't want anyone close to me to die." This drive is strikingly illustrated during Anakin's search for his mother on Tatooine, while he rides at breakneck speed against the backdrop of the setting suns, as if in a desperate attempt to deny his mother's declaration, "You can't stop the change, anymore than you can stop the suns from setting." Unfortunately for Anakin, it is his mother's words that are proven right, as she slips into death just moments after Anakin finds her. Shmi, in contrast to her son, does not view the death that separates them as the bitter end of everything good. "Now I am complete," she whispers calmly. Anakin's refusal to accept this peace results in a violent massacre that will put his very soul in jeopardy.

I'll take a moment here, before exploring Anakin's relationship with Padmé, to clarify that oneness with the spiritual world, and letting go of the physical, does not preclude the capacity to love, as the Jedi Order seems to claim. The Jedi recognize the danger of allowing attachments to lead to the dark side, and so forbid them entirely, but this need not be the case. Shmi loves her son; Luke loves his father as will be discussed later, and yet they do not inevitably lose their souls. There is something else at work here.

The flaw in Anakin that will lead to his downfall is not his desire to love; on the contrary, love is an attribute of the spiritual world that ultimately saves him. Rather, it is Anakin's tendency to color his love with a certain selfishness. His declaration to Padmé at the lakeside resort is no doubt sincere, and very compelling, but there are moments that warn us of the seeds of his fall. He speaks of his own suffering, "I'm in agony...I can't breathe...my heart is pounding..." (emphasis added) It is to fulfill his own longing that he wishes to receive Padmé's love. That is not to say that he would not give his own life to save Padmé's. The self-sacrificing tendencies of his childhood are still very much a part of him. However, because he views Padmé as something he longs to possess, he would also view her as something he would be in danger of losing. He is too much caught up in the physical world, believing that death is the end, the ultimate loss. He expresses this in terms that are well-nigh melodramatic after helping in the murder of Mace Windu, an act

that goes against his every sensibility in terms of the spiritual life. In a desperate attempt to justify what he has done, he states, “Just help me save Padmé’s life. I can’t live without her.” This is his justification, his clinging to that which cannot last no matter how he tries, and his abandonment of that which would last eternally. Palpatine, diabolically clever, exploits this misconception to great effect. Anakin’s soul is lost, and, in a bitter irony fitting with our theme, so is everything that he fought to hold.

Anakin’s son Luke begins in a position not too far removed from his father. Though he is on the verge of adulthood rather than a child, Luke is likewise idealistic, giving, willing to devote himself to the cause of the Rebellion at great cost to his own safety. Evidently he, too, has been brought up by caring people -- his aunt and uncle -- who have taught him the value of looking out for others. In contrast to his father, however, Luke seems to possess the ability to deal with loss to a certain extent. When his surrogate parents are brutally murdered, Luke mourns them, but then moves on to join Obi-Wan Kenobi’s quest, stating simply that “there’s nothing for me here now.” It could be argued that he seeks out the Rebellion at that point as a means to avenge his aunt and uncle’s deaths, but since there is little of the vengeful in his demeanor, that does not seem to be the case. Interestingly, it is the death of Obi-Wan, his mentor of only a few days, that pushes Luke closer to the edge. Upon seeing Vader strike down the Jedi, Luke is rendered immobile from shock, crying out his horrified denial of what has just taken place. Fortunately, his comrades -- along with the mysterious encouragement of Ben’s voice -- are able to bring him enough to his senses so that he can make his way to safety.

A key difference in Luke and Anakin’s situations, and hence their resulting reactions, lies in the losses they must deal with. Anakin’s behavior stems largely from the *fear* of prospective losses that may or may not occur. There is the aftermath of his mother’s death, of course, but he has been dreading such an occurrence since their separation, and it has been coloring his development for many years. His fear of Padmé’s possible death motivates much of his behavior during his fall to the dark side; her actual death occurs only after his fall has already, by and large, taken place. Luke, on the other hand, has already lost several loved ones before the events of *The Empire Strikes Back* -- his aunt and uncle and his mentor -- and his parents have died, to his knowledge, too long ago for him to remember them. So Luke deals largely with the *grief* of realized loss. What does this mean for his struggle between physical and spiritual? For Luke, it is not a question of using any means necessary, including the selling of his own soul, to prevent the deaths of loved ones. It is, instead, the question of whether to surrender restraint and goodness so as to enact vengeance on the one responsible for his losses, Darth Vader. This temptation is just as much tied with the worldly, limited perspective of the physical as Anakin’s, in that it is based on the assumption that the death of the offender will make everything right. Again, death is considered the end, the ultimate destruction.

Luke is particularly susceptible to this notion as he journeys from Dagobah to Cloud City. Although he goes there in the hopes of rescuing his friends, it is clear that a confrontation with Ben’s killer -- and, as he believes, his father’s -- is something he anticipates, perhaps even seeks out. Yoda has warned him that if he follows through with his plans, he would “destroy all for which they [his friends] have fought and suffered,” perhaps another way of saying that by attempting to save physical lives he will lose the spiritual. Indeed, this is very nearly the result of Luke’s rash encounter with Vader -- not only does he come close to literally losing his life, but he is confronted with offers to sell his soul that would have to present some temptation in the face of impending death. However, Luke is able to choose the spiritual path of self-sacrifice rather than self-preservation, and he falls willingly to a possible death rather than concede to Vader.

But something has heightened the stakes in Luke's struggle. He has been told the truth about his father, and must come to terms with his unexpected relationship with Vader. Vengeance, before this revelation, would have been dangerous enough, but now that Luke knows it is his own father who has wronged him, vengeance would be a personal and deeply perilous action, a fundamentally selfish act that throws awry all the principles of the spiritual life. And yet, ironically, his own mentors encourage him to commit this very act. Yoda tells him that he "must confront Vader" in order to become a true Jedi, and Obi-Wan, in response to Luke's protests that he cannot kill his own father, replies sadly that, if that is his decision, "the Emperor has already won." It would seem that both Jedi Masters, though they have long fostered a close relationship with the spiritual world -- Obi-Wan could not otherwise have surrendered to death and retained his identity even after his life ended, and Yoda likewise (although it is possible that by "confront" he does not mean for Luke to kill) -- yet both maintain a certain blind spot where the Sith are concerned. Perhaps this is understandable since they have witnessed firsthand the destruction wrought upon the galaxy by the Sith, but it is unfortunate nonetheless, and things would have turned out poorly indeed if Luke had heeded their advice.

Instead, Luke seems to have achieved an unprecedented understanding of the spiritual life by the time he is brought to Vader. He has come to understand that it is not Vader's life or death that matters, but rather Anakin's soul. Therefore he responds to Vader with compassion, with a plea to return to what he once was, and most of all with love. It is a love that surpasses what Anakin had, because it is not dependent on the rules of the physical life and stands fearless in the face of death. For a time, Luke does succumb to worldly fears and stands at the brink of losing his own soul. Interestingly, it is not his sister's death that Vader uses to bring out Luke's wrath, but rather the possibility of losing Leia to darkness. Even here Luke's attunement with the spiritual is accentuated. But at the last, Luke pulls back from the brink and refuses to heed the physical law of vengeance through life-taking. "I'll never turn to the dark side," he proclaims triumphantly, throwing aside his weapon. "I am a Jedi, like my father before me."

There are many who criticize Luke as foolhardy for dropping his weapon, especially since we have learned from *Attack of the Clones* that a lightsaber can repel Force-generated lightning. But I would argue that they are missing the point entirely. The battle aboard the second Death Star was never for Luke's life. It was for his soul. Dropping his weapon was a token of his release of all physical drives and fears. Death does not present the ultimate end for Luke; whether he lives or dies, he has already won. The spiritual has triumphed over the physical, and now, more even than Yoda or Obi-Wan, he has become a true Jedi. If this were the extent of his triumph, if Palpatine had then killed him and all were destroyed as the Death Star exploded, the saga would have had a moderately satisfying ending, though tragic to a certain extent. But Luke's choice leads to another triumph, one that few might have expected, but which is fitting to the theme of the conflict between the worldly life and the eternal. Anakin, stirred by his son's utterly selfless love and sacrifice, finds the strength within himself to do the same. No longer is he chained by a misguided obsession with physical laws, with the fear of death and loss. He understands that the only way to gain a lasting life is to let go of the ephemeral and vain things that he has clung to so futilely. It is not that he kills the Emperor, for as we have seen, perceiving death as the end solution is not a behavior in tune with the spiritual life. Instead, it is that he saves his son without thought for himself, since he must realize that attacking the Emperor in this state is tantamount to suicide. This is an action that can only be accomplished by strict adherence to the spiritual.

Anakin's last moments show us that he has truly overcome the physical. When Luke, grief-stricken, protests that he wants to save Anakin, his father replies, "You already have." At last Anakin knows what is really worth saving; that it means nothing to gain the world if the cost is his own soul. Perhaps recalling the pain he has caused Luke by his taunt about Leia, he whispers, "Tell your sister...you were right," as if to acknowledge that her soul is just as precious. Then death claims him, and yet it is, in fact, not the end. He retains his identity alongside Obi-Wan and Yoda, and we might assume that, if only in a metaphorical sense, Anakin is also reunited with all his lost dear ones, Shmi and Padmé, for he knows now that truly selfless love transcends all barriers, even death.

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Hamlet=Star Wars: Exploring the Amalgam-Protagonist

by Frank Clarke

One of the consistent components of heroic literature has always been the inclusion of a single, usually well-developed protagonist. Whether examining William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy or Arthur's search for the Holy Grail, the hero is always clearly defined and well-developed. His character attributes often exist in a state of flux, changing situationally. The hero is traditionally a male, reflecting the male-dominated world of his creator and audience. While represented by this lone character, the hero is usually much more than that. The single male protagonist often represents the concept of "good," fighting and eventually vanquishing "evil." In his book, *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell calls this, "the commonality of themes in world myths, pointing to a constant requirement in the human psyche for a centering in terms of deep principles." (XVI). The idea that a single man can perpetuate this change is appealing. The hero is usually on a quest, seeking either an object (Jason and the Golden Fleece, Arthur and the Holy Grail, Bilbo and the One Ring) or the completion of an extremely difficult task (Hamlet avenging his father's death, Jesus Christ taking on the sins of the world, Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter rescuing beautiful women on Barsoom in *A Princess of Mars*, 1917).

In the case of Hamlet, the protagonist is not only well-developed, but exceedingly multi-dimensional, to the point of absurdity. Hamlet is at once a man of action and one of reluctance. Hamlet is a betrayed, depressed, spoiled rich brat. Hamlet has lost his mind. Hamlet is bi-polar. Hamlet is a clever, learned man who does not act rashly, and uses his wiles to discover the truth. Hamlet hallucinates. Hamlet has supernatural help, as do all true heroes. In *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell writes, "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) (69). Hamlet is cultured and noble, yet crass and rude. Hamlet is a lover; in fact a heartbreaker. Hamlet is a skilled fighter. Like the Christ-Hero himself, Hamlet seeks atonement with his father, another of the hero-requirements set forth by Campbell in *Hero With a Thousand Faces*. All of these assessments can be convincingly argued, yet many are contradictory. The same things could be said of many archetypal heroes, from Christ to King Arthur. The classic literary hero, then, is a creation of convenience. He is not a man, but an all-encompassing composition of human traits, superimposed upon the protagonist by his creator with situational diplomacy.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the hero archetype has changed. While still fulfilling the requirements set forth by Jung and, more concretely, Joseph Campbell, in many cases this new-age hero is no longer a solitary figure. The hero has always had allies, compatriots, friends, and assistants. These allies assist the hero, but their character is one-dimensional at best, and often serves as either a foil to or mirror of the protagonist.

J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was published in 1954-55, about five years after the release of Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). The story followed the Heroic Paradigm so closely as to be obviously calculated, and had a large cultural impact, especially in America. The genre commonly referred to as "Heroic Fantasy" grew quickly, and subsequently became less predictable as the archetypal hero was re-invented from new perspectives. Michael Moorcock introduced one of the first anti-heroes in 1961 with "Elric of Melnibone." Marion Zimmer Bradley drew from Arthurian legend for *The Mists of Avalon* (1983), and re-invented the world of Camelot from the female perspective.

While these new perspectives provided variation, they still clung to Campbell's formula, and relied on a single hero/protagonist.

At the same time, a subtle but important change had taken place. Alongside the classic hero had begun to emerge a new hero; one who did not have to be absurdly complex. In the wake of World Wars that saw the formation of an alliance of many nations to defeat a single (or much less varied) enemy that many saw as evil personified, and perhaps as a backlash to Tolkien, writers began to create stories that used a group of characters as "hero."

C. S. Lewis, Tolkien's contemporary and friend, was one of the first to implement the use of what I shall call the "amalgam-protagonist." In *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* (1950), Lewis uses as his protagonist a group of children (Lucy, Peter, Edmund, and Susan). Each child has a clearly defined set of attributes...both strengths and weaknesses. Peter is the fighter, Lucy the discoverer. Edmund is bewitched, but strong of spirit. Susan is sometimes impetuous. Other attributes can be easily assigned, but none are overly contradictory. By using the amalgam-protagonist, Lewis awards the heroic adventure a more believable status.

The amalgam-protagonist is present in many American works published in the latter-half of the 20th century. It is most prevalent in the Science-Fiction genre. Published in the same year as *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Ray Bradbury's *The Chronicles of Mars* features a group of space explorers as the protagonist. Again, each member of the exploration party has his own character attributes. In the "Star Trek" television series (1966), creator Gene Roddenberry employs the amalgam-protagonist to great effectiveness. Like Peter in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Captain James T. Kirk is the character of focus, but he is not a solitary protagonist. He is the fighter and the commander, but the other omnipresent members of the crew (McCoy, Spock, Scotty, Uhura) are not allies in the same vein as the compatriots of, for example, Bilbo Baggins. For Baggins, the other characters are one-dimensional and supportive to the extent that they can be synopsized with simple name tags, i.e. "Gandalf the Wizard". The same is not true within the framework of the amalgam-protagonist. Returning to the example of the crew of "Star Trek"'s *U.S.S. Enterprise*, Kirk is surrounded by an African-American woman, an emotionless alien, a feisty engineer of Scottish origin, and a sometimes-crotchety doctor. Throughout their journey the characters that make up the amalgam-protagonist alternately share the spotlight, quest, and confrontation. The same is true of many Science-Fiction works that use the "quest" as their vehicle. In director James Camoen's 1986 release *Aliens*, each member of the amalgam protagonist has a purpose, from the over-anxious Private W. Hudson acting as a foil for Ripley (the character of focus) to L. Bishop, who is an android.

Perhaps the most successful author to apply the amalgam-protagonist to Campbell's hero-paradigm is George Lucas.

As critic Thomas Snyder writes:

> In terms of scope, the three *Star Wars* films are a modern equivalent to *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*. Not only do they depict a mythic history in the form of an epic narrative, they also tell a personal tale of courage and cowardice, adventure and romance... (449-50)

In his film *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977), Luke Skywalker is the character of focus, and it is he who most closely embodies the hero archetype, but unlike the traditional hero, he is

not a complex character. Lucas understands the realm of mythological/heroic fantasy, as exemplified by this excerpt from an interview printed in *Star Wars: The Annotated Screenplays*:

> I had a long-time interest in fairy tales, mythology, that sort of thing. I had decided that there was no modern mythology. The western was the last American mythological genre, and there had not been anything since then, I wanted to take all the old myths and put them into a new format that young people could relate to. Mythology always exists in unusual, unknown environments, so I chose space. I liked *Flash Gordon* as a kid, the Republic serials. It was the only sort of action-adventure thing I came across as a kid that I could remember. So I got interested in that. I went and actually talked to the people that owned the rights to it. They said they weren't interested. And I thought, I really don't need *Flash Gordon* to do what I want to do. I can create my own situation. So I just started from scratch. I went around a lot of different ways before I wound my way to where I finally ended up (27).

Lucas did create his "own situation," but he relied on a relatively new tactic do it. *Star Wars: A New Hope* has as its character of focus Luke Skywalker. Skywalker, like the afore-mentioned Captain Kirk does not stand alone, but is surrounded by characters that are as important to the story as he is. In fact, Lucas creates an even more compelling amalgam-protagonist. In Lucas' universe, none of the five characters who make up the amalgam-protagonist are "in charge." They are brought together by seemingly random incidents (tied together by the implication of a supernatural, unseen "Force" for good in the universe), united by a desire to vanquish the "evil empire."

In his book *Return of the Heroes*, Hal Colebatch writes of *Star Wars*:

> ...the characters are not motivated by egotism. They are not "bound for glory" as if "glory" were the purpose of it all. The motives of the good people are, (or, significantly, become) not to be "rich and famous" or to "win." Fame, glory and honours are shown to be rewards (by-products, as it were) of great achievements, not ends in themselves. This is an old-fashioned concept, hearkening back to the days when the term "hero" was reserved for someone dead.

In the same interview cited earlier, Lucas says:

> I read a lot of books about mythology and theories behind mythology; one of the books was *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell, but there were many others, maybe as many as fifty books. I basically worked out a general theory for the Force, and then I played with it. The more detail I went into, the more it detracted from the concept I was trying to put forward. I wanted to take all religions, major religions and primitive religions, and come up with something they might have in common. It worked better as I got less specific...So the real essence was to try to deal with the force but not to be too specific about it (35).

This allusion to Campbell's work provides not only proof that *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* influenced George Lucas as he wrote the screenplay for *Star Wars: A New Hope*, but an admission that he read "as many as fifty" other works as he honed the formula that would create a film that would become a cultural movement. If a significant portion of these books were Science-Fiction novels, Lucas surely came across the amalgam-protagonist time and time again.

The five members of the amalgam-protagonist in *Star Wars: A New Hope* are as carefully constructed as the tragic hero in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In fact, together, they make up all the characteristics of that unbelievably complicated construct we know as Hamlet.

Princess Leia provides the nobility that is nearly always present in the archetypal hero. Hamlet, of course is the Prince of Denmark. She has been betrayed by the evil Darth Vader, who has killed her family and friends. (Vader destroys the entire planet of Alderaan in Leia's presence.) Like Hamlet, she seeks to avenge the deaths of her loved ones.

R2D2 provides the craftiness and presence-of-mind of Shakespeare's protagonist. It is he who saves C3P0 and the message for Obi-Wan Kenobi by entering the escape pod. Like the Prince of Denmark, R2D2 has a tendency to become depressed. He also shows signs of stubbornness, and definitely provides comic relief.

C3P0, like Hamlet, is highly educated, skilled in diplomacy, learned in the art of language and wise in the ways of the world (or in this case, universe).

While I have already stated that Luke Skywalker is the character of focus, a case could be made that he really shares that honor with Han Solo. Han is the reluctant hero. He uses excuses to escape his destiny and claims to be in the adventure only for the money. As shown in the annotated screenplay, he shows signs of insanity and a disregard for his own life, saying with glee "here's where the fun begins" (56) as he and the others face death at the hands of an overwhelming number of Darth Vader's stormtroopers. He is the purest fighter of the almalgam-protagonist, and he thinks of himself as a ladies man. Han is also the embodiment of Hamlet's rash, unthinking side. He often acts without forethought.

Luke, however, is the one who loses his guardians, has supernatural help (the Force) and is guided by his spiritual father-figure in the guise of the slain Obi-Wan Kenobi. It is he who most closely resembles the archetypal hero. He acts to confront evil without considering his own well-being, seeks revenge for the death of both his guardians and Obi-Wan, and shows the naivete that is sometimes present in Hamlet. Luke, like Hamlet, has a ghostly advisor. For Hamlet, it is the ghost of his slain father telling him to avenge his death (Act I, Scene V). For Luke it is Obi-Wan Kenobi telling him to "use the Force" (115).

All of the characters that make up the amalgam-protagonist in *Star Wars: A New Hope* exhibit signs of bravery at one time or another in the film. Below I have created a table that makes it clear that: 1) Hamlet has such a wealth of attributes he can hardly be considered more than a construct, and 2) the five members of the amalgam-protagonist in *Star Wars: A New Hope* embody all of Hamlet's facets, but separated in such a way as to make them palatable.

HAMLET	HAMLET	LUKE	HAN	C3PO	R2D2	LEIA
Action hero	x	x				
Reluctant hero	x		x			
Nobility	x					x
Lover	x		x			
Crafty	x		x		x	
Insane	x		x			
Avenger	x	x				
Son	x	x				
Brave	x	x	x	x	x	x
Rash	x		x			
Depressed	x				x	
Fighter	x		x			
Outraged	x					
Betrayed	x					x
Learned	x			x		
Cultured	x			x		
Father killed	x	x				
Ghostly Advisor	x	x				
Heartbreaker	x					x
Naive	x	x				
Stubborn	x				x	
Humorous	x		x		x	
Diplomatic	x			x		
Wise	x			x		

In George Lucas' first draft of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, he created only a single protagonist, Annikin Starkiller. Annikin "combined some of the qualities that would later define both Luke Skywalker and Han Solo" (ed. note-8) As Lucas says, "His character is basically a cynical loner who realizes the importance of being part of a group and helping for the common good...compromising and sacrificing his own welfare for those of others."(8) Eventually, these concepts helped Lucas decide to split the protagonist, more than once.

The amalgam-protagonist concept allows the audience to identify more closely with at least part of the hero. By limiting the number of characteristics given any one member, each part becomes more human, yet the sum remains superhuman. As Joseph Campell states in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*:

> For the mythological hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast, the keeper of the past. From obscurity the hero emerges, but the enemy is great and conspicuous in the seat of power; he is enemy, dragon, tyrant, because he turns to his own advantage the authority of his position. He is Holdfast not because he keeps the past, but because he keeps.

Perhaps the modern hero emerges from obscurity and is smart enough to realize that he alone cannot defeat the enemy.

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"Handbook? What Handbook?"
Mentoring the Chosen One in *Star Wars* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*
by Lady Aeryn

Star Wars and the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* have long had a prominent connection, in the real world as well as in the worlds and characters they've established. *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon has attended *Star Wars* conventions and even staged mock lightsaber duels on the set of the show with his crew, many of whom are also fans. *Star Wars* references are sprinkled throughout the series, and *Buffy*'s theme music is even performed by a band called Nerf Herder.1 Both series center on an archetypical Hero, a prophesied Chosen One, who is faced with a great destiny to uphold (and inevitably struggle with).

One recurring presence in a Hero's tale like that of Anakin Skywalker or Buffy Summers is that of the archetypical Mentor -- the figure or figures whose purpose is to provide the Hero necessary guidance on their journey until the point it is deemed the Hero must proceed forth on their own. Were it not for the Mentor, the Hero would wander blindly, perhaps never finding their intended path. He does not go on the Hero's journey himself, but provides the Hero with the knowledge to do so.2 As stated in an old proverb, the Mentor opens the door -- but it's the pupil that must walk through it.3 However, not all Mentors are equally successful in their purpose.

The methods by which Anakin was trained by his Jedi teachers and Buffy was trained by her Watcher Rupert Giles have significant differences between them. Looking at those differences can illuminate a key part of why while both Chosen Ones' journeys were colored by struggles -- both internal and external -- against the "Dark Side," one Chosen succumbed fully and tragically to it, while the other did not.

I. Prophecy Girl (and Boy)

"You were the Chosen One! It was said you would destroy the Sith, not join them! You were to bring balance to the Force, not leave it in darkness!"
-- Obi-Wan Kenobi to Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader, *Revenge of the Sith*

"In every generation, there is a Chosen One. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons, and the forces of Darkness. She is the Slayer."
-- Opening monologue, BtVS season one and two

The surface comparisons between the series' central characters are obvious to viewers of both. Anakin and Buffy are young, blonde, attractive, supernaturally powerful, willful, have plenty of emotional baggage, and fatal taste in romance. Both are the specifically labeled Chosen Ones4 of their respective series, one in their entire world prophesied at a young age to fulfill a greater destiny, and imbued -- not by choice -- with a great power to do so.

Both are Heroes in the archetypically defined sense, individuals who commonly possesses superhuman capabilities or idealized character traits that enable him/her to perform extraordinary, beneficial works for which he or she is famous.5 It is Anakin's prophesied duty to destroy the Sith and bring balance to the Force; it is Buffy's to protect humanity from the numerous supernatural evils that would otherwise prey on it unchecked. Anakin, perhaps conceived by the Force itself, has perhaps more raw potential in it than any other

being in the galaxy; strength in the Force typically lends to traits like well-above average physical and mental strength, coordination, and a degree of clairvoyance. Buffy, like all Slayers, upon her “calling” is imbued with above-average physical strength, coordination, and recuperative powers, and also a slight clairvoyance that occasionally manifests in dream-visions, all of which are intended to make her an ideal instrument to fight evil that the typical human is incapable of surviving.

At the beginnings of their journeys, both Anakin and Buffy are inexperienced, naive youths who would likely have continued on unremarkable lives had they not been shoved into the spotlight. Anakin, had Qui-Gon Jinn and Padmé Amidala never walked into the dusty shop where he worked as a slave, might have lived out his life a slave on Tatooine, never becoming a Jedi, marrying Padmé and fathering Luke and Leia, or even becoming Darth Vader. Meeting Qui-Gon and Padmé thrusts Anakin into events occurring on a galactic scale, putting him in place to become one of the most crucial shapers of the *Star Wars* galaxy. Buffy, had she never been Called, would likely have continued as a stereotypical Southern California girl, with no more pressing concern than waiting for a boy to beg her to go to a dance with him. When the series begins, Buffy has already lost her ‘normal’ life, having been kicked out of her high school for burning down the gym (populated by vampires, unknown to the administrators). Her newly-divorced mom is forced to relocate from Los Angeles to the small town of Sunnydale, the only school that would take Buffy. Despite her hopes to regain her old life, on her first day of school Buffy finds her duty has followed her, that Sunnydale has a huge demon problem of its own that she must deal with.

II. Master and Padawan, Watcher and Slayer

When Anakin’s and Buffy’s characters are introduced, neither of them lives in an "intact" family. Both are only children[6] who live with struggling single mothers. Anakin has no father and his slavemaster Watto provides little in the area of guidance; Buffy's father appears a couple of times early in the series but eventually disappears from her life completely. At the beginning of their journeys, a father figure is notably absent, setting the stage for their meetings with their mentors -- Anakin his Jedi teachers (and unfortunately Chancellor Palpatine/Darth Sidious), Buffy her Watcher.

The Watcher/Slayer relationship, at its most textbook form, is closely analogous to the Master/Padawan Jedi one. The Watcher, like a Master to a Padawan, trains with the Slayer one-on-one, and is the Slayer’s primary source of training and guidance. Both pairs report to a Council -- the Jedi Council in *Star Wars* and the Council of Watchers on *Buffy* -- steeped in centuries of tradition. The two Councils share similar strict codes about what is expected from that master/pupil relationship. Both councils consider deep emotional attachment detrimental for student as well as teacher, be it inside their Order or out (both Anakin and Buffy wholeheartedly reject this idea). Some Potential Slayers, like most Jedi, are identified by the Council at an early age to begin training.[7] In Buffy’s case, she only becomes aware of her status upon the death of the current Slayer (a new Slayer is called from a predetermined line of Potentials the moment the reigning one dies). Anakin and Buffy both began their training late enough that they had both become extremely set in the ways of the world outside the controlled circumstances of their Orders -- particularly in the need for meaningful relationships with other people -- and do not find these new circumstances an easy fit, and the difference in their ability to adapt comes in the form of the Mentor they are paired with.

Anakin in *The Phantom Menace* is already a passionate individual who knows clearly what he wants -- to get himself and his mom out of slavery and off Tatooine and see the galaxy. At the very beginning of his journey, his ideal mentor seems to fall right into his lap. Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn senses Anakin the moment he sets foot on Tatooine, and the two seem to click almost immediately. Anakin is full of questions, which Qui-Gon easily answers. He does not sharply curb Anakin's passionate impulses, but rather finds useful ways to direct them, such as advising on how to succeed in the Boonta Eve pod race. He readily shows praise and affection when Anakin displays impressive character or intelligence. When Qui-Gon does offer guidance, Anakin does not unquestioningly follow all of it (as shown in his interpretation of Qui-Gon's "stay in that cockpit" order), but nor does he bristle or outright reject it. Upon meeting Anakin, the boy becomes a foremost item in his mind -- he genuinely believes him to be the Chosen One, freeing him from slavery and even standing up to the Council (and against his own apprentice) proclaiming he will train Anakin himself if the Council won't approve it. Qui-Gon also recognizes Anakin's need for family, attempting to free Anakin's mother along with Anakin. Qui-Gon is compassionate, innovative, gentle, and patient --seemingly the perfect teacher for Anakin's unique upbringing.

However, before his journey can even truly get started, Anakin loses Qui-Gon. His replacement is Qui-Gon's by-the-book apprentice, barely out of apprenticeship himself, who takes Anakin on more to fulfill Qui-Gon's dying wish than from any desire or readiness to train a pupil. Though Anakin and Obi-Wan Kenobi do eventually grow to love each other, from the beginning it is a far rockier pairing than Anakin's short time with Qui-Gon. Obi-Wan, who has grown up knowing nothing but the ways of the Jedi, simply does not have the psychological vocabulary to comprehend why Anakin can't steadily curb his more passionate emotions or get past his need for attachment and find the same satisfaction in the Order that Obi-Wan himself has. Many of the problems that plague Anakin -- his unresolved attachments to his mother and Padmé, his frequent attempts for affection and validation from Obi-Wan -- Obi-Wan misinterprets or dismisses completely as something Anakin can/must simply grow out of "in time." The most obvious such instance is Anakin's nightmares about his mother in *Attack of the Clones* -- which obviously turn out to be far more than mere dreams, and set the stage for Anakin not entrusting to Obi-Wan his similar nightmares about Padmé in *Revenge of the Sith*, leading to ugly consequences for everyone. Even in the moments when Anakin's headstrong nature yields positive results, Obi-Wan is reluctant to concede it. It is not until Anakin is on the verge of spiraling downhill in *Sith* that Obi-Wan is able to verbalize how proud he is of Anakin and how much Anakin means to him, and by then it's too little, too late.

Like Anakin, Buffy's mentor finds her, already working at Sunnydale High when Buffy arrives. There is some abrasion at first, as Buffy has no desire to reclaim her Slayer mantle. Giles finds her willful and stubborn; Buffy finds him bookish and stodgy. Buffy insists on keeping her life as normal as possible, such as trying to get back into cheerleading and dating (neither of which has much success), which Giles initially frowns upon as a distraction. Though insisting on a regular course of training, from the beginning Giles does permit some concessions in the rules for Buffy, mainly in allowing her a small circle of friends who are aware of her secret identity as Slayer and assist her in said duties. As they work together he learns to become more relaxed and trusting of Buffy's decisions, not even discouraging her when she and a noble, ensouled vampire named Angel (vampires in the Buffy world are typically soulless, therefore evil) fall in love, and is there to support her when that relationship ends badly. He treats Buffy as more of an equal in the decision-making process when she goes on missions, allowing her input instead of using his position as Watcher to simply bark orders -- knowing she'd likely rebel

if he tried to do that anyway. Like Qui-Gon, he does not attempt to simply cut off his pupil's passionate impulses, but finds a way to help her integrate them into her training.

While Giles and Buffy frustrate one another at times, they do come to love one another. Giles' greatest fear is Buffy dying, failing her as a guardian, as shown in a late season one episode. When Buffy needs guidance, it's Giles she always runs to first. In season three, Giles chooses to defy the Council when he believes Buffy's life is unduly threatened by an archaic Watchers ritual, causing the Council to fire him for having an inappropriate "father's love" for his Slayer. In season four, Buffy openly acknowledges Giles is more of a father to her than her biological father. Buffy does not lack a father figure -- she has already found a satisfactory one, and therefore the lack of one does not leave her susceptible to someone who might play on that desire to snare Buffy's powers for his own advantage -- as happens with Anakin.

III. "I Have Failed You."

While the search for a suitable mentor is not a lingering factor in Buffy's journey, it is for another *Buffy* Chosen -- the rogue Slayer Faith, whose journey closely mirrors Anakin's. Faith grows up with no significant guiding figures, leaving her a fiercely independent individual who doesn't take to authority well. When Faith arrives in Sunnydale, Giles is assigned to both her and Buffy, but his attention lies more on Buffy. Next, Faith's new Watcher turns out to be someone manipulating Faith to get a powerful mystical object in Buffy's possession, which severely bruises Faith's shaky ability to trust others, Buffy and friends included, and especially Watchers. Her next Watcher is naive, inexperienced, and expects Faith to adhere strictly to his orders with no questioning; she rejects him instantly. She is pushed even further away from Buffy, becoming more reckless, even accidentally killing a human and not caring, believing her power as a Slayer makes her superior to those who don't have it. Not finding suitable authority on one side, she turns to the evil but charismatic Sunnydale Mayor Wilkins, who shows a very caring and fatherly interest in Faith and makes her his most trusted assassin. Eventually, Faith -- like Anakin -- is redeemed, but it's a long road before she reaches that point.

As said, what happens to Faith in many ways mirrors Anakin's own descent into the grasp of evil. He loses in short succession both his mother and the first father he's ever known, and is placed with a mentor who -- while well-intended -- is not a well-suited match for him, which leads Anakin to seek more sympathetic mentoring elsewhere. In *Clones*, ten years on in their relationship, Obi-Wan still finds Anakin too brash and overconfident and reprimands him often; Anakin is resentful because he believes Obi-Wan is holding him from his true potential. Though the two of them do share a few genuine moments of affection, Anakin is not satisfied with Obi-Wan's mentoring, as he admits twice in unguarded moments of frustration to Padmé, and he has begun to seek filling that gap elsewhere in Chancellor Palpatine, the unknown Darth Sidious, who desires Anakin's power to supplement his own. Palpatine, like Mayor Wilkins, is on the surface a very charming and congenial guy. He shows no hesitation in expressing affection or praise for Anakin, who is too naïve to realize that someone who praises him might have a motive that has nothing to do with caring about him as a person.

By the time of *Sith*, Anakin and Obi-Wan seem to be on more even footing as peers with Anakin's elevation to Knighthood, but problems still remain, particularly with trust. Anakin has still not confided his and Padmé's secret marriage to Obi-Wan, and refuses to even consider asking Obi-Wan for help with his nightmares about her, likely believing Obi-Wan

will -- like before -- dismiss his dreams as nothing, or worse, reveal his forbidden marriage to the Council. Anakin wastes no time going straight to the top in seeking -- indirectly -- counsel on how to address his visions. But Yoda's counsel only compounds Anakin's frustration, as Yoda advises him to simply accept the inevitability of his loved one's death and find peace in it. When the Council, who has always been mixed about Anakin's presence in the Order, appoints Anakin to their ranks with the intent to use him to spy on Palpatine, whom Anakin sees as a friend, Anakin's trust in all the Jedi -- Obi-Wan included -- is damaged further. Again, Palpatine is there to offer the well-timed sympathetic ear, and is all too willing to stir up Anakin's resentment of the Jedi and offer advice on how to save Padmé -- and Anakin is all too willing to listen. As observed in one online essay, it is Anakin's choice of mentors that creates the true tragedy of the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy.8

Though Buffy does not slip to the dark side the way Anakin or Faith does, she does go through extremely dark stages, and it is the loss of her mentor figures that heralds those periods of her life, with the loss of first her mother, then her father figure shortly after. In *Buffy*'s fifth season, Buffy's mother dies suddenly of an aneurysm, leaving Buffy in charge of not only her Slayer duties, but raising her sister Dawn as well, and the pressure is almost too much for Buffy.

At the end of *Buffy*'s fifth season, Buffy sacrifices her life to stop Hell from being unleashed on Earth. At the start of season six, Buffy's witch friend Willow -- believing Buffy's spirit is trapped in Hell -- resurrects her. After her resurrection Buffy is disconnected emotionally, taking no joy in anything, and is overwhelmed with the responsibilities that await her upon awakening. (It is revealed that when she died Buffy was actually in heaven, was finally at peace, and was torn from it.) Believing that the only way Buffy is going to be able to find her way is if he is not there for her to constantly lean on, Giles returns to his home of England. But after his departure, Buffy goes even lower. She is unable to go back to college and has to take a lousy job at a fast-food joint simply to pay the bills left behind by her mother's death, and her sister's delinquent behavior worsens. Things become bad enough that she almost allows a demon's poison to convince her that she's actually in a mental hospital and her Slayer life is just a hallucination. Desperate to feel *anything*, she embarks on an addicitve, violent affair with one of her oldest enemies, the vampire Spike. She does not love Spike, and realizes she is using him. She eventually does break off the affair, after which Spike attempts to rape her. It is Giles' return that begins the cycle of repair, him realizing that part of letting Buffy grow up is her being able to ask for help if she does need it. This enables Buffy to step out into the role of Mentor herself in the final season, to her sister and to Potential Slayers.9

IV. The Inflexible Tree

"The tree that is inflexible will snap."
-- Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

Buffy: "Wait. Handbook? What handbook? How come I don't have a handbook?"
Giles: "After meeting you, Buffy, I realized that, uh, the handbook would be of no use in your case."
-- BtVS 2.10, "What's My Line, Part II"

The Watcher's Council, like the Jedi Council, has had a long-established standard for training that has been in place "since the dawn of civilization." A young girl would be chosen, trained in relative isolation with her sole purpose to be a demon-killing machine.

The Council felt no need to adapt their ways to individual cases, each Slayer and potential Slayer trained in the same mold. This worked adequately, but not brilliantly -- the line of succession ensured there was no worry about where to find the next Slayer to be called into duty, but the reigning Slayer still never lived very long -- until Buffy is Called. The existing standards for Slayer training do not take someone of Buffy's background into account, one not trained from girlhood and allowed to develop social and familial attachments before being thrust into her training.

This is almost exactly the case for Anakin as well. For a thousand generations, the Jedi were all trained in more or less the same manner, and, to be fair, it seems to have worked fairly well. Though occasionally someone like Count Dooku comes along who finds himself dissatisfied with the mold and leaves the ranks, there does not appear to be an epidemic of rogue Jedi running all over the galaxy. Every potential Jedi is taken from their birth family early, raised from the beginning to be emotionally detached, and schooled in the ways of the Jedi. Since their technique has worked so well for so long, when one individual who has not been raised by their standards is accepted into training -- Anakin -- the Council sees no need to adapt in this case, and their unwillingness to address the unique issues Anakin's case brings up leading them to be completely blind to the circumstances that will lead not only to Anakin's downfall, but theirs as well.

The fatal flaw of the unquestioning, rigid textbook-style training favored by both Councils is illustrated prominently on *Buffy* in the case of another Slayer, Kendra.[10] Kendra represents a concept very similar to that of the Jedi Order, a life of pure duty, free of emotion and attachment, who follows preset codes to the letter, and unwilling to adapt those rules even in extreme circumstances. Kendra has been trained in the textbook way for Slayers: given up by family at a young age, nearly all her time devoted to her Slayer training, which occurs in almost total isolation, in a very controlled environment. She is well-studied in mystical lore and fighting technique, the latter of which Buffy observes is technically flawless. But Buffy, who has learned to incorporate her emotions into her fighting style, is quick to observe Kendra's key flaw: she would defeat Kendra in battle because Kendra has no imagination, no ability to use her emotions to adapt to the constantly changing flow of a fight. True to Buffy's assessment, Kendra meets death in an almost unremarkable manner: her training did not teach her how to think, and she is easily put under the thrall of the clairvoyant vampire Drusilla – who Buffy has repeatedly faced -- who simply slits Kendra's throat with her fingernails without any fight whatsoever. As Anakin would say, “[Mind-tricks] only work on the weak-minded,” and Kendra proves that point gruesomely.

When Giles begins to train Buffy, it is unclear how long he has been a Watcher, but it appears to have been a number of years, and that he was trained to be one from a very young age, multiple generations of his family having also been Watchers. Giles is clearly experienced enough to recognize almost immediately that the long-established methods of Slayer training will not work on Buffy -- at least not without some modifying -- but all Obi-Wan *has* to go by in training Anakin, only recently having been a student himself, is the established method.

Since Obi-Wan has no frame of reference for someone of Anakin’s background, he does not realize or believe any need to adapt the existing Code -- which has never had to take someone of Anakin’s upbringing into account -- exists for his pupil. While Anakin is forced to abruptly drop all connections to his former life, to anything outside his oath to the Jedi Order, and to constantly keep a tight rein on his more passionate feelings -- Buffy is not. Giles allows her to stay in school, date, keep friends, and eventually even reveal her

identity to her mother, to integrate them all into her life as the Slayer, and this makes all the difference in the world. (As Spike observes to Buffy in a season five episode, the reason Buffy's lived longer than any other Slayer is because she's got a reason to stick around - her friends and family, connections to the world -- which previous Slayers lacked.) It's a difficult integration at times, but at least she *has* the choice, whereas Anakin is forced to keep his attempts at a personal life -- chiefly, his marriage to Padme -- a secret from his Jedi superiors. Giles' willingness to adapt his methods gives Buffy a crucial emotional support network to deal with the stress of her duties, whereas Anakin is forced to find his own in what ends up being the most dangerous place possible.

The Jedi Council and the Watcher's Council both come to their own gruesome ends, like Kendra, because of their inability to innovate or adapt, leaving them blinded to outside threats. Mace Windu dies when Anakin, whose emotional torment has gone almost completely unnoticed by the Council, turns on him to save Palpatine (and therefore his wife), paving the way for Sidious to electrocute him and throw him from a window. The others -- with the exception of Yoda and Obi-Wan, who end up in permanent exile -- are murdered like the rest of the Jedi by the very clone troopers they are commanding when Order 66 is executed, having not realized the unthinking clones could turn on them in an instant if ordered to. The Watcher's Council, in their isolation from the true horrors the Slayer faces, is unable to foresee a plot against them, and they are killed when an evil plotting to take out the Slayer line of succession for good blows up their headquarters. When the Council is rebuilt, it is with Giles at its head, just as the new Jedi order is headed by Anakin's son Luke, the Jedi who was successfully able to integrate the codes of the Jedi with those of a personal life, and who was finally able to guide Anakin to his destiny and redemption.

Rupert Giles is Buffy's Qui-Gon Jinn, the one who is able to recognize his pupil's situation as a unique one the established protocol is not designed to accommodate, and who can quickly adapt his methods to his pupil's unique conditions. Obi-Wan attempts to adhere strictly to established protocol, believing that the only adaptation needed is on Anakin's part, not his or the Code's. Both Obi-Wan and Giles have handbooks for training their assigned Chosen, but unfortunately, only one of them realizes that in some instances, the handbook is completely useless.

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2. Steele, Helen. "Myth Across Time: Jung, Archetypes, and Strange Journeys," *The Outer Rim* webzine, Issue #12, October 1998.

3. Ancient Chinese proverb.

4. There has been debate in some circles as to whether the "Chosen One" label refers to Anakin or his son Luke; George Lucas specifically states in the "The Chosen One" featurette on the *Revenge of the Sith* DVD that the "Chosen One" is indeed Anakin.

5. Wikipedia, "Hero."

6. In the first four seasons of BtVS, Buffy is indeed an only child. However, in season 5, a sister -- Dawn -- is suddenly introduced, who it was gradually revealed was created by outside forces and inserted into Buffy's life for the purpose of protecting her from demonic powers; Buffy's and her loved ones' memories of the past were all altered to make it seem as if Dawn had always been there.

7. Wikipedia, "Potential and New Slayers."

8. Online essay, "The Wise Mentor Archetype in the *Star Wars* Theory."

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Following the Will of the Force: Qui-Gon Jinn as Maverick
by ami-padme

The Jedi Order's golden age is one of the many facets in the *Star Wars* saga that the prequel trilogy gave fans the chance to see for themselves for the first time. Decades after the original trilogy showed us a decimated Order that had been reduced to two great masters in hiding -- Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda -- and a neophyte in Luke Skywalker, *The Phantom Menace* promised from its very first trailer to show what the Order was like prior to its fall. In addition to seeing Obi-Wan grow from Padawan to Knight to Master, watching a warrior Yoda oversee the Council, and witnessing Anakin Skywalker's path from slave to Jedi to Sith, the prequels introduced many new Jedi characters, with a particular focus given to the members of the Jedi Council. One of the main new characters, however, was not a member of the Council, and in fact provided a helpful contrast against those Masters and the rest of the Order in general -- Qui-Gon Jinn. An independent, confident, and open-minded individual, Qui-Gon is perhaps the best example from the *Star Wars* universe of the maverick character type.

While the first definition of the word "maverick" in *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* focuses on the word's roots in the Wild West – an American cattleman named Samuel Maverick became well-known in the 1800s for not branding the calves in his herd1 – the subsequent meanings are related to the word's contemporary use in describing both fictional characters and real people. The second definition is: "one that refuses to abide by the dictates of or resists adherence to a group."2 While Qui-Gon is not the full-fledged rebel or loner this definition appears to imply, he is certainly shown to be in a certain level of conflict with the Council and Order during *The Phantom Menace*.

Qui-Gon is unconcerned about ever becoming a member of the Jedi Council, despite the fact that it is shown to be a great honor, which only the most powerful and well-regarded Masters in the Order eventually achieve. The Council apparently demands a high level of abidance from those who sit on it, and while that is an understandable demand for any organization to make of its leaders, Qui-Gon has chosen not to put the Code above doing what he believes is right or above his efforts to listen to and follow the Will of the Force. His Padawan, Obi-Wan, tells him directly, "If you followed the Code, you'd already be on the Council," but Qui-Gon's relaxed response ("You still have much to learn") shows that in his mind there are more important things in a Jedi's life than strictly following the rules. In fact, this specific conversation between the Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan focused on the former's determination that Anakin would be trained to become a Jedi, despite what the Code or the Council had to say about his being "too old." He later insists on training the boy himself, though the rules forbid him from taking on more than one Padawan at a time, and the Council insists that only they could properly determine whether Obi-Wan was truly ready to become a Knight. In this case, the conventions of the Order were less important than his belief that Anakin was the Chosen One of prophecy, and Qui-Gon exhibits his apparently long-standing trait of not playing by the rules more than once in the saga's opening chapter.

Although Qui-Gon does not choose to place a large personal emphasis on the Code, his lack of rule-following does not imply a lack of ethics or morality on his part. Indeed it is quite clear that Qui-Gon possesses a very strong moral center in conjunction with a high level of self-confidence and assuredness. One of the contemporary, popular uses of the term "maverick" tends to focus on politicians and suggests that not only do mavericks refuse to adhere to certain groups -- be they the political parties, government entities, or

even the nations the politicians are affiliated with -- but that they do so for higher, noble reasons. The label “maverick” can imply, rightly or wrongly, that the person in question has chosen to take a surprising, unpopular, or risky stand because their personal or professional ethics will not allow them to continue to follow the rules or to do what is expected of them; breaking from the rules and expectations becomes the right and moral thing to do.[3] As mentioned, Qui-Gon was willing to bend or break the rules of the Order in *The Phantom Menace* because his conviction that Anakin was the Chosen One had to be stood up for, even in the face of a skeptical and disapproving Council. Certain parts of the Code could be considered more a consolidating of “best practices” or a formalizing or the usual occurrences than a statement of “right versus wrong,” but whatever the advantages of doing things a certain way (and after a millennium's worth of success, the Code must have many), these rules do not necessarily speak on morality, or do not seem to do so in a way that Qui-Gon could find compelling in the face of the other issues he and the Order are forced to deal with in Episode I. In a manner similar to the way current maverick politicians are perceived to act, Qui-Gon is able to look beyond the Code to bring himself closer to the Force (and therefore, closer to the true nature of what the Order perhaps ought to be about at its core). The fact that Qui-Gon is able to attain immortality in *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith* -- a feat that no other Jedi had previously achieved in the history of the Order -- speaks to the idea that Qui-Gon’s approach was correct in many ways.

The third and final definition of “maverick” from *The American Heritage Dictionary* uses the word as an adjective: “being independent in thought and action or exhibiting such independence.”[4] Again, Qui-Gon’s actions throughout Episode I fit well with these ideas. Aside from his solitary support of Anakin, he is equally steadfast and alone in his immediate belief that the Sith have returned after his encounter with Darth Maul on Tatooine. We also see indicators of independent behavior in Qui-Gon’s teaching methods with both Obi-Wan and Anakin. The official *Star Wars* website says in its biography of Qui-Gon that he is “[a] venerable if maverick Jedi Master…a student of the living Force. Unlike other Jedi Masters who often lose themselves in…the unifying Force, Qui-Gon Jinn lived for the moment…”[5] His first lines in Episode I show him disagreeing with Yoda’s instructions to Obi-Wan regarding his Padawan's focus on the future versus the present. Later, he begins teaching Anakin even before the boy is brought before the Council, encouraging him to trust his instincts and use them to his advantage. After the Council fails to reach a decision on Anakin’s training, Qui-Gon still manages to impart a lesson to his ward about the importance of quieting his mind to listen to the Will of the Force.

Qui-Gon also displays his independent streak throughout his handling of the series of crises he encounters as a result of his mission to negotiate with the Trade Federation following its invasion of the planet Naboo. He saves and takes on the Gungan Jar Jar Binks as a member of the group, agrees to seek refuge on Tatooine and venture out into the lawless planet to secure needed supplies, entrusts the entire group’s ability to leave Tatooine with a young child he has only just met, and engages in high-stakes gambling to win the child’s freedom. After his previously mentioned dealings with the Council on Coruscant, he finds himself back on Naboo, supporting Queen Amidala’s risky plan to re-take control of the planet. In the end, Qui-Gon enters a potentially deadly battle with Darth Maul, and at a critical juncture during the fight, chooses to meditate and quietly listen to and channel the Force in what wound up being some of the last moments of his life. After being fatally wounded, he uses his last breaths to reiterate his belief that Anakin is the Chosen One, and to ensure that Obi-Wan will take it upon himself to train him as a Jedi. The ability to improvise and quickly adapt to rapidly changing situations is a trait assigned to people, both fictional and real, who are called mavericks for the way they deal with

military or battle situations.6 Qui-Gon's circumstances in Episode I may not be nearly as grave as some of those individuals, but he does show a penchant for finding ways to deal with what comes to him.

Qui-Gon Jinn's maverick personality helps define the prequel-era Jedi Order by standing apart from it, offering the audience an alternate vision of what makes a great Jedi, and highlighting some of the issues that played a factor in the Order's fall. Though his time on screen is limited, his impact is felt throughout the *Star Wars* saga.

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2 "maverick," *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. <dictionary.reference.com/search?q=maverick>

3 Contemporary examples of this perception of "mavericks" in American politics include Senator John McCain and Senator Joseph Lieberman. Internet searches of either name and the term "maverick" produce a wide variety of results.

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5 "Qui-Gon Jinn," *The Official* Star Wars *Website Databank.* < www.starwars.com/databank/character/quigonjinn>

6 One fictional example is Captain James T. Kirk of *Star Trek*. StarTrek.com says of Kirk: "[T]he tall tales of his exploits…are numerous...[He was] the first captain to bring his starship back relatively in tact after a five-year mission…[He] gained a reputation as an independent whose success couldn't be argued even though he often bucked the system." <www.startrek.com/startrek/view/series/TOS/character/1112496.html>

"Help me take this mask off" -- Power and Redemption through Unmasking
by Matril

For centuries, masks have played a role in the cultures of varied peoples. From Native American tribes in North America to the ancient Greeks, masks have entertained, inspired respect and fear, and facilitated religious rituals (see Laurent). At its most basic level, a mask is a form of disguise, of taking on the identity of someone or something else. It is more evocative perhaps than any other disguise because it conceals the face, where emotions and personality are most prominently displayed. It is a profoundly potent symbol of transferred identities; indeed, in some ancient societies it was believed that a mask literally "transforms whoever wears it, giving them the strength and power of what it represents and making them no longer human" (Laurent). The word "mask" itself obtains its derivation from "French *masque*, from Italian *maschera*, from Medieval Latin *masca*, *specter, witch, mask*" (dictionary.com), indicating its supernatural and sometime sinister origins. Symbolically, a mask could be seen as a sign that its wearer's true self has been buried and replaced by what the mask represents.

Masks, both literal and figurative, appear frequently in *Star Wars*. The most famous is Darth Vader's, but other prominent masks are worn by both Jango and Boba Fett, Leia as the bounty hunter Boussh, and clone- and stormtroopers. If we extend the list to include other forms of masking the face to obscure identity, we can mention Zam Wesell's veil, the Naboo queens with their face paint, and Padmé's flight helmet as part of her disguise at the start of Episode II. The films are rife with characters who wish to conceal their faces for myriad reasons, and it can be surmised that this wearing of masks often carries the symbolic meaning of shifting identities. For example, Anakin Skywalker's transformation into Vader is physically manifested as he is masked, concealing the face we have come to associate with Anakin and leaving us with a dark, expressionless visage that shows he has become someone else entirely. Other maskings, more temporary or less sinister, nonetheless carry the meaning of an altered identity.

But along with the motif of masks, there is also a recurring enactment of unmasking. Padmé takes off her helmet to speak with the mortally wounded Cordé; Luke removes his stormtrooper helmet to introduce himself to Leia; Leia pulls off her bounty hunter mask to profess her love for Han; a dying Anakin pleads with Luke to remove his mask. Sometimes it is as simple a matter as no longer needing a disguise. However, on a deeper level, if masking represents the replacement of one identity with another, then unmasking marks the return to the genuine self. Yet this return is not entirely without change. If the mask has truly caused its wearer to absorb the traits of another identity, then with the reclamation of the old self, there will still be knowledge and wisdom gained from that journey into another persona. Much like "the two kingdoms" described by Joseph Campbell, between which the hero must journey, there is a "wisdom brought forth from the deep" (Campbell 217), an understanding which he carries back on his victorious return home from the strange world he has traveled through. Thus, a synthesis must be attained to achieve the genuine self; to assimilate what has been learned as the Other, without losing one's real identity. The power of unmasking, in fact, is largely dependent on the reasons for assuming the other identity in the first place. I will discuss how episodes of unmasking play prominent roles in the development of Leia, Padmé and Anakin as complex characters. For Leia, it is the moment when she reveals herself to Han after she has freed him from the carbonite. Padmé's revelation occurs when she informs Boss Nass that she is in fact Queen Amidala, and, finally, Anakin's time comes just before his death.

Leia's character has already undergone significant development before Episode VI. Though quick-tongued and brusque when she first appears in Episode IV, she is revealed to also possess a softer side, in her fondness for Luke and her growing feelings for Han. Yet she has a tendency to resist completely opening up to her emotions. Even though her attraction to Han is undeniable, she is no more willing to admit it than he is to acknowledge his feelings for her. It is only at the moment of crisis in Episode V, when Han is in danger of perishing, that she is able to declare her love. This marks the beginning of a new character progression, which is continued when she dons the guise of a bounty hunter. The superficial purpose of the mask she wears is obvious -- she needs to infiltrate Jabba's palace without the chance of being recognized, either as a friend of Han's or as an attractive woman for Jabba's lewd desires. Symbolically, she is descending into a sort of underworld, a place where emotions are unrestrained, where a burst of temper can result in a grisly death. It is not a pleasant place, but some of its aspects can be very useful. In her guise, Leia is able to pass the guards in the entryway, literally blasting through their resistance, and brazenly addresses Jabba face-to-face (or rather, face-to-mask) to demand a bounty for her supposed prisoner, Chewbacca.

Leia has become something very dangerous. In her role as bounty hunter, she threatens to blow apart the entire palace, presumably including herself, with a thermal detonator if her demands are not met. Perhaps she is merely bluffing. Yet we know from previous examples that Leia is capable of rash and violent behavior. In Cloud City after Han has been imprisoned in carbonite, she looks on approvingly while Chewbacca strangles Lando, an expression of vengeful vindication on her face. Indeed, one could trace the path of her emotions as Yoda outlined in Episode I. Her fear of losing Han has led to anger at those who threatened him, then hatred of his betrayer, and finally the suffering of Lando. Leia is treading dangerous waters, and it results in a delay that ultimately prevents them from catching Boba Fett's ship before he takes Han away. If Leia had cast aside the desire to make Lando suffer, they might have saved Han much earlier. Boushh, then, could represent a side of Leia which accomplishes much that is useful by dubious means, but is destructive at the center. She must avoid embracing the persona too fully.

When she frees Han from his carbonite prison, she is still in the guise of the bounty hunter. For dramatic purposes, of course, this is a device that keeps the audience guessing until the last moment. As far as the symbol is concerned, though, it indicates that Leia is clinging to the other self represented by her mask, not yet able to return to her true identity. Why does she hold back? Boushh is not genuine, but he is powerful, without the vulnerability that is a part of Leia's true self. Removing the mask will uncover that vulnerability once more, and it is only natural if Leia subconsciously resists it. The moment of truth arrives when Han touches her mask and asks, "Who are you?" Here, at last, Leia chooses to unmask, and the meaning of that act is typified in the words that accompany it: "Someone who loves you." This is her true, genuine self, the self that is capable of love and willing to bear all the uncertainties that go with it. Yet her masking has not left her unchanged. She retains the skills of the bounty hunter that allowed her to rescue Han, though the darker aspects have been shed. These skills are what enable her to take care of her captor, Jabba, effectively but without the vindictiveness she manifested earlier toward Lando. She is Leia again, and yet she is something more than what she was at the start.

Throughout the events of Episode I, Queen Amidala's identity is associated with the traditional face paint mask of Naboo royalty. When she sheds the mask, she takes on the persona of the handmaiden Padmé. Curiously, what could be considered her "true"

identity is associated with the wearing, not the removal, of her mask. This puts a twist on the meaning of her mask, particularly the unmasking. First of all, the identities of Queen Amidala and Padmé Naberrie both contain aspects of genuineness. Padmé is more than a guise used to protect the queen from assassins; she is also a place of emotional refuge. In a sense they could be considered two halves of the complete person; the one concerned with the guiding, rational forces required of a leader, such as Amidala demonstrates during the Federation crisis; and the other one allowing the vulnerability and emotion that facilitates friendship and connectedness, such as Padmé forms with the young Anakin. This version of a mask fits in well with another word from Latin, "*persona*, meaning a mask, a role or a person which evolved from the Etruscan word *phersu* (a mask)" (Laurent), indicating not so much an evil or sinister side as merely a particular role.

If either of the two is more genuine, Padmé is more likely to be so. She wears the unassuming disguise of no disguise, while Amidala's costumes obscure her form and features in a manner that is positively flamboyant. Yet Amidala is, for all that, not a false being. All that she does for her people as the queen is marked by a passionate desire for justice and compassion, evidenced in such statements as "I was not elected to watch my people suffer and die while you discuss this invasion in a committee!" When she arrives on Coruscant and again dons the face paint of the queen, she returns, largely, to her original persona, in order to become a part of the political workings of the Senate, but the question of her other identity remains, and is not fully resolved until the return to Naboo.

When Padmé reveals herself in a symbolic unmasking to Boss Nass, after a long moment of hesitation that indicates how difficult such an act truly is, she steps in front of Sabé, her decoy who is presently wearing the mask of face paint, and names herself as the true queen. "I am Queen Amidala." However, it is important that she does not take on the physical trappings of the queen after her revelation. She donned the other identity to preserve her life and power as queen, and now she will bring back new reserves of power and life-strength as she returns to herself. She plays the role of leader in the forthcoming battle, but yet she remains Padmé as well. Her unmasking lifts her to a level of power and identity that she had not previously occupied, even as queen. As Padmé she could not have swayed Boss Nass to their cause; nor could she have done so as the masked queen. As both identities at once, she is successful.

Her dual identity continues to help her in the battle; literally, as a way of fooling the viceroy, and symbolically, as she draws on the resources gained from both parts of herself. At the end celebration, the two selves are acknowledged; Amidala by the face paint, and Padmé by the warm smile she gives to Anakin, whom she befriended as a handmaiden. It is clear, by Episode II, that she has retained this synthesis, for she is now known as Padmé Amidala, a union of both halves. It could be argued, in fact, that these two halves later become irreconcilably fractured, upon Anakin's fall to the dark side, when the part concerned with a deep sense of right and wrong and the part concerned with emotional attachment stand at opposite ends of a widening chasm. This may be the source of the spiritual wound that kills her.

One of the crowning events in the *Star Wars* saga is the return of Anakin Skywalker from the Dark Side. Perhaps nothing symbolizes this return more evocatively than the removal of the mask he has worn as Darth Vader. The unmasking is meaningful only after considering what conditions resulted in his wearing of the mask in the first place. On a practical level, it was needed for survival, after Anakin's duel with Obi-Wan resulted in severely damaging injuries. Metaphorically, the total deforming and masking of the face we have known as Anakin Skywalker marks the final step in his transformation into Darth

Vader. However, the physical and the metaphorical are not as separate as they may seem at first. Vader wears the mask to escape an otherwise inevitable death; he becomes a Sith Lord in an attempt to prevent the dreaded death of his wife, an attempt that instead resulted in her death. The irony is complete: with his skull-like mask, Vader is almost an icon of living death. Within the faceless mask are contained all the fatalistic and fanatical motivations of the dark being that Anakin has become.

Vader himself acknowledges his rejection of what Anakin was when he tells Luke, “That name no longer has any meaning.” His mask is more sinister by far than those previously discussed, fitting with the original etymology: “The word *mask* comes from the Old Italic *masca*, which defines an evil, hideous character. In Latin, it was referred to as *larva*, which was an infernal being, similar to the *scheme* of Germanic cultures” (Laurent). And yet, just as Anakin’s face is still there beneath the mask, albeit scarred and disfigured, his old self lingers beneath Vader’s crushing identity, waiting for the time to reemerge. And just as Luke is the one to physically remove Vader’s mask, it is Luke who helps to bring back Anakin.

The concealment of Anakin’s genuine self lasts considerably longer than Padmé or Leia’s; in fact, longer than any other’s. From the start of Episode IV until the end of Episode V, most of the main characters are entirely unaware that the identity of Vader is masking anything at all. He is assumed to be monstrous both inside and out, while his continuing brutal behavior seems to prove, for the audience members who are aware of the events of Episode III, that he is indeed “no longer human” (Laurent). Vader’s grim revelation to Luke, “I am your father” finally indicates that Vader has been masking more than just his face; however, the masking does not end with this revelation, for both his face and true self remained concealed. Obi-Wan Kenobi goes so far as to assert that “he’s more machine now than man, twisted and evil.” It is Luke alone who rejects this fatalistic judgment; even in the face of Vader himself insisting that “It is too late for me, my son.” Luke tells him staunchly, “I feel the good in you.” He has seen beneath the mask where others were deceived by the completeness of the concealment.

Just as Vader’s mask cannot be removed without serious consequences, Anakin’s true self cannot emerge unless a heavy price is paid. Anakin may return, but he must face the situation that has resulted from the choices he made as Vader. He saves his son and rids the galaxy of the great evil of the Emperor, but by betraying Vader’s position, he earns the vindictive wrath of Palpatine, and is mortally wounded. Yet there is victory for him on the verge of his death, poignantly symbolized as he unmasks. And there could be no better symbol in this ritual than for Luke to be the one to remove the mask of Vader, for it was Luke who urged Anakin to reemerge above the false self of the Sith Lord.

Anakin has returned, yet more than any other unmasked character, he has brought new knowledge and wisdom from his long ordeal of concealment, earned through great pain and penitence. This Anakin no longer fears loss through death; when Luke protests the deadly act of removing his mask he argues that “nothing can stop that now;” more importantly, to Luke’s desperate plea to save him he says calmly, “you already have.” The young Anakin, before the ordeal of his masking, could not comprehend this great truth, and so fell to Palpatine’s temptations. Now he has learned enough to truly bring balance, and die in peace. Could there have been some other, less destructive way to give Anakin this wisdom than the concealment of his true self under cover of a brutal Sith Lord? Perhaps. Nevertheless, he must do what he can with the circumstances as they are, and he is able at last to find power and peace in the unmasking of his genuine, transformed identity.

From bounty hunters to unassuming handmaidens to Sith Lords, *Star Wars* is rife with disguises that mask the face and bury the identity, for the varied purposes of protection, power or even basic life support. But the true power and emergence of the transformed, genuine self can only occur when the masks' wearer finds the strength to remove the disguise and reveal all the vulnerabilities and strengths evidenced in a vibrant, unconcealed face.

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The Women In Anakin's Life
by lazypadawan

Anakin Skywalker's downfall was the result of his overpowering emotions and the determination to literally do anything in his power to save his beloved wife from dying. "I won't lose you the way I lost my mother," Darth Vader tells Padmé in *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin has suffered losses in his life, but none haunt him more than losing his mother and his wife.

More than one observer has noticed a connection between Anakin's intense love for his mother and the intense love he has for Padmé. Several of them have labeled this connection as Oedipal, a Freudian term for the period in a young boy's life when he is unconsciously in love with his mother and desires that love exclusively. The term is drawn from Greek tragic hero Oedipus who usurps his father Laius's throne by killing him and then unwittingly marries his mother Jocasta[1]. Certainly one must wonder if it is coincidental that Shmi and Padmé both happen to be dark-haired and dark-eyed. But it is not to say Anakin was in love with his mother in the way he was in love with Padmé. More accurately, Anakin goes from cleaving to his mother to cleaving to Padmé.

Since there is no natural or step father in the Skywalker household, Anakin is the de facto "man of the house" at birth (slave owners notwithstanding). Anakin is blessed and cursed with a depth of feeling greater than that of most people and the only one to accept his affections as a child was his mother. Add to that the adversities of a slave's life bringing mother and son closer together as well as the possibility Shmi may have some Force sensitivity, and you have the makings of a very powerful bond. They were each other's world and it's in Shmi's presence that Anakin feels safe and loved. Conversely, Anakin's protective tendencies began as a child. He feels a natural obligation to protect his mother, an obligation that takes on different forms throughout his life. During the events of *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin's life changes forever when he is offered freedom and the Jedi path. At age 10, he is filled with curiosity and a desire for adventure yet he is not ready to leave his mother. He is still deeply attached to her. Shmi is prepared to sacrifice the relationship with her son in order to give him a better life. She must realize she may never see him again. But Anakin is too young to fully appreciate that sacrifice, nor did he know that he was entering a culture that forbade even familial ties outside of the Jedi Order. His first experience with this culture shock was when he was being questioned by the Jedi Council in *The Phantom Menace*. He doesn't understand why it is significant that he would miss his mother or fear for her. It is natural for him to cherish the intense bond between mother and son, or to want to protect his mother.

The Phantom Menace marks not only Anakin's separation from his mother, it also marks his first meeting with Padmé Naberrie, his future wife. Padmé enters his life just as he is being separated from Shmi. In fact, her presence is the catalyst that leads to the separation of mother and son. Padmé is the herald of Anakin's destiny, for better or worse. It is the mechanical problems on her ship that brings it to Tatooine. This allows Qui-Gon Jinn to encounter Anakin and discover that he's the Chosen One. Anakin races in the Boonta Eve competition to help Padmé and when he leaves Tatooine, she looks after him. It is not coincidental Padmé is older than Anakin, just old enough for her to be in the beginning of adolescence while he is still pre-pubescent. Moreover she is entrusted with ruling her planet. This greater responsibility makes her more mature than most girls her age. So she is not only a peer and a friend to Anakin, "(b)efore she becomes lover, she also acts as a surrogate mother for Anakin in the absence of Shmi[2]." She provides the

maternal gesture of covering Anakin with a blanket when he's cold and listens sympathetically as he admits he misses his mother. He gives her a gift of love, the pure love of a young boy, in the form of the japor snippet. She will literally carry this amulet to her grave. Throughout *The Phantom Menace*, Padmé expresses caring for Anakin and concern for his well-being. She doesn't want him to race in the Boonta Eve and during the race, she looks on nervously. She takes the time to talk to him on the ship and even when she is constrained by her duties as Queen, she finds a few moments to tell Anakin she still cares about him. Her kindness is not forgotten after the events of *The Phantom Menace*.

Anakin's boyish love for Padmé only grows over the decade apart from her. Interestingly enough, Anakin's love for and devotion to his mother does not fade over the years either. He carries a powerful love for both women in his heart despite not having seen either one of them in years. But fate in *Attack of the Clones* will bring them both back into his life.

It is interesting to note that Anakin first mentions the nightmares about his mother as he and Obi-Wan are standing guard in Padmé's apartment. Already, Anakin's protectiveness toward his mother has been transferred to a protectivess toward Padmé. In *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin acquiesced to Padmé's greater age and experience. But as a young man, he is now in a position to be the man of Padmé's house as well, and he possesses the skills to keep her from harm. This is why he is insistent on taking a proactive role in finding Padmé's assassin. He wants to show her that he cares for her and is able to protect her.

As Anakin pursues Padmé romantically, his nightmares of his mother's pain and suffering vanish and are temporarily forgotten. They're of less concern to him as he and Padmé grow closer. Then there is the pivotal scene where Anakin expresses his feelings for Padmé. She makes it clear their relationship can go no further. Anakin separates from Padmé and not so coincidentally, he dreams of his mother that night. Moreover, the nightmare is so bad, he's motivated to go find Shmi. Without the possibility of Padmé's love, Anakin reverts to his "first" love, his mother. But once Anakin is troubled, Padmé steps into her role as surrogate mother again. She goes with Anakin to Tatooine, partially to keep him out of trouble with the Council, partially to provide him with comfort and support. For most of the time, Padmé looks on with concern instead of acting authoritatively as she tries to act earlier in the film. She gives Anakin an embrace before he goes in search of Shmi and when he returns, she comforts him in his darkest moments. She also absolves him of murdering the Sand People in retaliation for Shmi's death, telling him "to be angry is to be human." When Anakin won't act to rescue Obi-Wan, out of insecurities from a perceived failure to save his mother, Padmé stirs him to action, helping to bring Anakin back to his old self.

With Shmi gone and with Padmé accepting his love, Anakin's feelings for Padmé grow in intensity. She's the only woman in his life by the end of *Attack of the Clones*, the only mother figure remaining. With the galaxy at war and tensions with the Jedi Council, Anakin feels safe, loved, and secure with Padmé. Moreover, there are two aspects of their relationship that create a more intimate bond than what he had with Shmi. First there are shared secrets: their marriage and the Sand People incident. Second is the sexual nature of their relationship. Anakin is the sort who doesn't take his feelings for anyone lightly, so assuming Padmé is the only woman he's been intimate with, it stands to reason he'd consider their relationship closer than with any other. "She's a substitute mother, lover...all the things the Jedi Order won't let him have[3]."

Therefore, when Anakin is faced with the premonition of his wife's death, all of the emotional and psychological baggage he'd carried from his relationship with Shmi comes to the forefront. He'd sworn at his mother's grave not to fail again but this time the quest is to save his mother's emotional surrogate, Padmé. Unfortunately, it is Anakin's obsession with cheating death that leads to Padmé's own death.

The tragedy isn't just Padmé's death leading to decades of isolation for Vader. It's also that his commitment to evil all but destroys the relationship with the final woman in his life, Leia. Another man ends up raising his only daughter, and for the rest of Vader's life, his relationship with Leia is adversarial. Had Anakin remained in the light and raised Leia himself, they would have undoubtedly been very close. In fact, it's interesting that the very last thoughts of a redeemed Anakin are of her.

Footnotes:

1. "Oedipus complex," Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipal_complex>

2. Hanson, Michael J. & Kay, Max S. *Star Wars: The New Myth*. Xlibris. 2001, pg. 359.

3. Smith, Jim. *Virgin Film: George Lucas*. Virgin Books: London. 2003, pg. 253.

"That Boy Is Our Last Hope": Andrew, *Star Wars* and the Figure of the Jedi in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"
by Sophia van Gameren

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When the first installment of George Lucas's *Star Wars* trilogy was released in 1977 it became a cinematic cultural phenomenon with a large cult following. Joss Whedon's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" ("BtVS") came to our television screens twenty years later and, like the *Star Wars* trilogy, Whedon's show instantly drew a cult audience. Cult films and television series draw on themes and ideas used in myth and legend. Although "everyday life" changes from generation to generation, the timeless nature of myth enables the human experience to have continuity throughout the ages that "real life" cannot provide (Sakal 2003, p.239). In all mythology, there are common images, motifs and symbols that together become story patterns. Both *Star Wars* and "BtVS" use mythical story patterns. By comparing the *Star Wars* characters Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader to "BtVS" character Andrew Wells, this paper will explore the story pattern Joseph Campbell refers to as the conflict of good and evil. The mythic pattern of the journey of the hero will be examined by contrasting the two differing yet important journeys undertaken by Luke Skywalker and Andrew.

Cult fandom is of vital importance to "BtVS" as every episode since the pilot actively acknowledges the show's dedicated audience (Larbalestier 2002, p.228). The word "cult" is defined in *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (2003) as "an instance of an almost religious veneration for a person or thing, especially as manifested by a body of admirers." This definition suggests that certain films and television series are, like religious icons, "worshipped" by a dedicated, yet often small, audience. In this sense, "BtVS" fandom has a great deal in common with the first media fandom, *Star Trek* (Larbalestier 2002, p.229). When the *Star Wars* trilogy hit cinema screens, *Star Wars* fandom mirrored *Star Trek*'s cult fandom. "BtVS" and other cult phenomena such as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* are full of mythical implications and overtones and the ageless theme of good versus evil is predominant in each of them.

In season six of "BtVS," Whedon plays on the idea that BtVS is a television series with a cult following. Whedon creates a "Big Bad" of human "geeks" -- called the Trio -- who are fanatics of cult films and series such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, James Bond and "The X-Files." The Trio is made up of Warren Meers, Jonathan Levinson and Andrew Wells, who team up to "take over Sunnydale" ("BtVS," season six) and become Buffy's "arch-nemesises...ses" ("BtVS," season six).

In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell states that good versus evil, especially within the individual, has always been of great importance. Campbell argues that "it has always been the prime function of mythology...to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back" (Campbell 1993, p.11). Mary Henderson supports this idea suggesting "a myth shows us what we're up against; it identifies the 'bad guys' -- who often turn out to be within us...and it helps us find a way to defeat them" (Henderson 1997, p.6). Both Whedon and Lucas explore this idea that the hero and the villain are not opposites but rather they are of the same flesh (Campbell 1993, p.108).

Through the characters of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, Lucas demonstrates that both good and evil exist within the individual, and how easy it is to give in to the Dark Side. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker takes his first journey to the Dagobah System. It is here that Luke is shown that both good and evil reside within him. Luke enters a cave where he has a vision of Darth Vader. Vader and Luke embark in a light saber dual, resulting in Luke decapitating Vader. Vader's mask blows up and reveals Luke's face. The vision suggests that Luke's shadow side is Darth Vader, and that the Dark Side of the Force exists within Luke as much as it does in Vader (Henderson 1997, p.6). Henderson argues that although Vader personifies evil, he has the potential to be redeemed, yet while Luke personifies good, he has the potential to become evil (Henderson 1997, p.120). Just as opposing characters Luke and Vader demonstrate the individual internal struggle between good and evil in *Star Wars*, so does Andrew in "BtVS."

Andrew Wells is just one character in the Buffyverse who illustrates the conflict between good and evil within the individual. Andrew is reflective of the *Star Wars* character Anakin Skywalker (Darth Vader). Like Anakin, Andrew is lured to the Dark Side. While Anakin turns evil because he underestimates the power of the Dark Side, Andrew turns to black magicks and summoning demons in order to "belong" in the world and acquire friends.

Andrew is introduced to us in "Flooded" ("BtVS," season six), when we first meet the Trio. Warren, Jonathan and Andrew are considered to be "geeks"; they have no other friends and do not fit in with the rest of the Sunnydale community. Andrew and Jonathan are illustrated as the "weak" members of the Trio who follow Warren's orders. While Andrew and Jonathan join the Trio in order to do things such as control the weather, miniaturize Fort Knox, conjure fake IDs, use shrink rays and get girls, Warren's intentions for the Trio are purely evil. Like Anakin Skywalker, Andrew underestimates the power of the Dark Side. In "Dead Things" ("BtVS," season six), Warren hypnotizes his ex-girlfriend Katrina with one of the Trio's gadgets and she becomes his sex slave. When Katrina comes out of her hypnotic state she tells the Trio that what they are doing is rape. After Warren kills her, Andrew sits crying next to Katrina's body. It is at this point that Andrew realizes that Warren's villainous plans are becoming criminal and truly evil. Towards the end of the episode, however, the power of evil begins to change Andrew's ideas and the innocence that both he and Jonathan brought to the Trio. When the Trio discovers that Katrina's death has been labeled a suicide in the police report, Andrew starts to taste the power of evil, and says to Warren and Jonathan, "We really got away with murder. That's...kinda cool."

Previously, in the episode "Flooded" ("BtVS," season six), Andrew tells Warren that he has no intention of killing anybody: "But aside from the moral issues and the mess, we can get in trouble for murder." But after Katrina's death, Andrew, like Warren, tastes the dark power that comes from murder (Tracy 2003, p.47). Andrew begins to help Warren in his attempts to destroy Buffy and eliminate Jonathan from the Trio. Unlike Andrew, Jonathan is not lured to the Dark Side; he simply wanted to be a part of the Trio in order to "belong." Andrew is quickly seduced by the power of evil, as was Warren, and follows in Warren's footsteps by becoming a murderer.

The journey of the individual is of extreme importance for both Whedon and Lucas throughout their respective stories. Throughout the *Star Wars* trilogy we watch Luke Skywalker, a naïve farm boy, go on a journey that sees him learn about the Force, save the princess, begin his training as a Jedi Knight and learn of his family lineage. Whedon, like Lucas, understands the importance of the journey to his characters. Although Andrew is not a hero like Luke Skywalker, the two characters both embark on life-altering

journeys. Andrew's and Luke's physical and spiritual journeys, although very different, are equally important.

Andrew is introduced to us as a morally ambiguous "evil genius," who treats the Trio alliance as a game (Tracy 2003, p.47). But the influence of the evil Warren transforms Andrew into a sinister young man who becomes a murderer. In "Conversations with Dead People" ("BtVS," season seven) Andrew kills his only remaining friend, Jonathan. Although under the influence of The First, in the guise of Warren, Andrew still consciously chooses to murder Jonathan. It is not until Andrew becomes the Scoobies' "guestage" that he begins to realize that he was evil, and now wants to help the Scoobies fight against The First: "I admit, I went over to the Dark Side, but just to pick up a few things, and now I'm back" ("BtVS," season seven). It is his redemptive journey, however, that is vital in understanding the character of Andrew and his development, more so than his journey to the Dark Side.

Redemption is an important and recurring theme in "BtVS." Gregory J. Sakal proposes that "without evil, there would be no struggle, no sacrifice, and hence no possibility of or need for redemption" (Sakal 2003, p.251). In *Return of the Jedi*, the Emperor tries to turn Luke to the Dark Side. In his attempts to turn Luke evil, the Emperor ultimately gives Darth Vader the strength to redeem himself by saving Luke's life. Luke's father dies as Anakin Skywalker, rather than the evil Darth Vader. At the end of *Return of the Jedi*, when Luke and the Rebellion are celebrating in Endor, Luke sees his father, Anakin Skywalker, reunited with the other two deceased Jedi Masters, Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi. Like Lucas, Whedon understands that evil is necessary in order for salvation and redemption to occur.

Andrew's redemptive journey begins after he accepts the fact that he was evil. In "First Date" ("BtVS," season seven) Andrew tells The First: "I follow Buffy's orders now. I'm redeeming myself for...killing Jonathan." After wearing a wire when speaking to The First, Andrew discovers that "redemption is hard" ("BtVS," season seven). Despite the challenge, Andrew is prepared to work hard, and even to suffer, to amend his murderous past: "I'm good now. When the fight is over, I'm gonna pay for killing Jonathan" ("BtVS," season seven).

Although Andrew recognizes that he and Darth Vader share similarities -- "I'm like Vader in the last five minutes of *Jedi*" ("BtVS," season seven) -- their redemptive journeys differ greatly. By saving Luke's life and destroying the Emperor, Anakin Skywalker receives redemption just before he dies. Whedon's characters, on the otherhand, are redeemed through living. Although Anakin died as one of the "good guys," had he lived, would he have been seduced by the Dark Side again? It is one thing to return from the Dark Side just before death, but for Whedon, redemption is about living and making amends for the past, as well as resisting the temptation of the Dark Side day after day. Yet Whedon also questions whether people are ever really redeemed for their actions.

Andrew's episode "Storyteller" ("BtVS," season seven) poses an important question to "BtVS" viewers -- is redemption ever possible? In this episode Andrew records Buffy's fight against evil, in order to leave "a legacy for future generations." Buffy tells Andrew, "You make everything into a story so no one's responsible for anything because they're just following a script." This episode sees Buffy take Andrew to the Seal of Danzalthar. It is here, when Buffy threatens to kill Andrew, that Andrew becomes frightened of suffering the same fate as Jonathan and begins to cry, illustrating his sorrow and regret of his "dark past." Andrew's tears close the Seal of Danzalthar, but his grief and remorse continue.

Andrew finally takes responsibility for murdering Jonathan, and accepts that he is a murderer who perhaps may never be redeemed: "I killed him. Because I listened to Warren, and I pretended I thought it was him, but I knew -- I knew it wasn't. And I killed Jonathan." Andrew tells the audience at the end of the episode, "Here's the thing. I killed my best friend. There's a big fight coming and I don't know what's going to happen. I don't even think I'm going to live through it. That's, uh, probably the way it should be." Andrew abruptly turns off the video camera, letting the audience know he is done telling stories and is ready to take responsibility for his actions. Andrew also accepts that even if he is redeemed, nothing will bring Jonathan back or take away the fact that he murdered another human being.

"Chosen" ("BtVS"), the final episode of the series, implies that Andrew is on the path to redemption. In the battle against The First, although not heroic like Luke Skywalker, Andrew discovers that he has finally found a genuine friend (besides Jonathan). Just as Darth Vader sacrificed his life for his son Luke, Anya sacrifices her life for Andrew. Anya sacrifices herself for a simple human being, not a hero. The significance of this is that Anya thought Andrew was a person worth dying for. Sakal defines sacrifice in "BtVS" as an act that consecrates a higher purpose and is an important part of the journey (Sakal 2003, pp.240-1). Although Anya may have sacrificed her life in order to redeem herself for running away from the Apocalypse of Graduation Day, her sacrifice ultimately enables Andrew to continue his redemptive journey and make amends for his past by living a meaningful existence. This suggests that Anya's death not only protected Andrew's life, but also had a higher purpose -- Andrew's life and redemptive journey was not complete, yet Anya's was. Not only does Andrew appreciate Anya's sacrifice -- "She was incredible. She died saving my life" -- but he questions his survival, "Why didn't I die?" From here, Andrew continues on his redemptive journey and starts to become a person who really "belongs."

After the destruction of Sunnydale, Andrew appears in the Angel episode "Damage" (Angel, season five). In this episode we discover that Andrew has begun to live a purposeful life as he is being trained by Giles to be a Watcher. Although Andrew still appears as his comical self, he takes his role as a Watcher seriously and we see that he is finally living a meaningful life fighting evil and is surrounded by a circle of friends -- just like Luke Skywalker.

By drawing on themes from George Lucas's *Star Wars* trilogy, which was heavily influenced by the content of Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Joss Whedon's "BtVS" not only has elements of contemporary pop culture but also ancient mythology and legend. Although Andrew provides comic relief in BtVS, he is a central character in demonstrating the mythical story patterns of good versus evil and the journey of the hero in the Buffyverse. Andrew demonstrates how easy it is to be seduced by the Dark Side. In his journey to the Dark Side and back, Andrew reflects Anakin Skywalker with similarities so obvious that even Andrew comments on them. Both Andrew and Anakin demonstrate the conflict between good and evil within the individual. Ultimately, however, Andrew wants to emulate the Jedi Knights and what they represent -- courage, strength and responsibility. Andrew often quotes and talks about Jedis. He wants to be admired, respected and needed, just as Luke Skywalker was. Andrew's redemptive journey illustrates that by living a meaningful and remorseful life, he is slowly beginning to reflect the Jedi Knights. Like Luke Skywalker, Andrew wants someone to say of him "that boy is our last hope."

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"The Chosen One": Prophecy, Destiny and Free Will in *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*

by Matril

The works of George Lucas and J.K. Rowling both contain prophecies that raise the age-old question of fate versus free will. The dilemma is apparent. If someone is able to accurately foresee future events, does it follow that those events are inevitable? Is there any place for free will in such a situation? For Anakin Skywalker and Harry Potter, these concerns are paramount, and play out in varied ways in each of their stories. They are both set apart as the one to fulfill a particular prophecy by overcoming a great evil, and both face internal and well as external struggles in the process of coming to terms with the prophecy.

In *The Phantom Menace*, the prophecy is first brought up when Qui-Gon Jinn makes mention of a startling theory to the Jedi Council, that Anakin was conceived by midichlorians, the microscopic lifeforms that give the Jedi their sensitivity to the Force. Mace Windu responds incredulously: "You refer to the prophecy of the one who will bring balance to the Force? You believe it is this boy?" Later, we learn that the subject of this prophecy is known as "the Chosen One"; it is the term used by Qui-Gon when, as his dying wish, he asks Obi-Wan Kenobi to train Anakin. "Promise me you will train the boy...he is the Chosen One...he will bring balance." It is an ambiguously worded prophecy. What exactly has brought, or will bring, the Force out of balance in the first place, and how is the Chosen One supposed to restore balance? The answer is never stated overtly in the films, though comments such as Mace's "if the prophecy is true, he is the only one who can bring the Force back into balance" imply that the Jedi are aware of an imbalance that has already occurred. From Lucas's statements[1] we are led to believe that it is the Sith who have brought the Force out of balance, and that their destruction is the only way to restore balance. Whatever the precise meaning of the prophecy, however, it places a heavy burden upon Anakin, one that brings into question his very ability to choose.

Harry Potter feels himself to be in a similar situation in the penultimate chapter of *The Order of the Phoenix*, when Albus Dumbledore at last reveals to him the prophecy that was made before Harry's birth. We are given the specific wording:

> The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches...Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not...and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives...the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies... (OoTP, 841)

Almost immediately after reading these words we are given a hint of a distinctly non-fatalistic interpretation of this prophecy, when Dumbledore explains that either Harry or Neville Longbottom could have been the subject, but Voldemort chose Harry to be his foe. However, the issue of free will versus destiny is not at all resolved, as evidenced by Harry's dismally fatalistic words: "So...does that mean that...that one of us has got the kill the other one...in the end?" Dumbledore answers sadly in the affirmative. Where is Harry's ability to choose in all of this? His only real choice, it seems, is between killing or being killed.

The crux of the dilemma lies in our perception of time as linear, in which results occur, temporally speaking, after their causes. It is difficult to perceive of a prophecy doing anything other than causing the event which it foresees. Certainly we are not accustomed to the idea of a future event causing an occurrence in the past. On the other hand, if someone such as a seer, or an omniscient higher power, is capable of seeing all time simultaneously, what does that mean for those of us still within linear time? Jason T. Eberl discusses this conundrum in his essay in *Star Wars and Philosophy*: “How can I change the future that is already known by someone who can’t be wrong about it?” (Eberl 7). And yet there is hope still for free will, in all of this. If indeed time need not be viewed linearly, then something does not necessarily need to have occurred first in order to cause a later event. In other words, a future event or choice may determine what is prophesied, rather than the other way around. In addition, mere knowledge of something does not have to equate with cause. Augustine argues thusly: “Your recollection of events in the past does not compel them to occur. In the same way, God’s foreknowledge of future events does not compel them to take place...God foreknows all the things of which He Himself is the Cause, and yet He is not the Cause of all that He foreknows.” (qtd. in Eberl 8) Therefore, a prophecy need not erase free will or demand adherence to a choiceless destiny. How does this play out for Anakin or Harry?

The nature of the prophecy referring to Harry and Voldemort is explicitly delineated in *The Half-Blood Prince*, in the pivotal chapter entitled "Horcruxes." After realizing the enormous tasks that lie ahead of him in order to defeat Voldemort, Harry feels overwhelmed, and rather disappointed that Dumbledore continues to insist that his ability to love is the “power the Dark Lord knows not.” Dumbledore, however, avers that “Voldemort singled you out as the person who would be most dangerous to him -- and in doing so, he made you the person who would be most dangerous to him!” (*HBP* 509). As already explained in the previous book, the prophecy had been equally likely to refer to either Harry Potter or Neville Longbottom, but it was Voldemort’s choice that made it Harry. Indeed, it was Voldemort’s choice to act on the prophecy at all that resulted in its fulfillment -- Dumbledore hints intriguingly that there are recordings of prophecies stored in the Department of Mysteries that have not been fulfilled at all. This is little comfort for Harry, however, since he still cannot see that he has any choice in the matter, even if Voldemort did. Dumbledore then gives him the knowledge that finally offers the comfort and courage he needs. “Imagine, please, just for a moment, that you had never heard that prophecy! How would you feel about Voldemort now?” (*HBP* 511-12). And Harry knows that he would have chosen still to pursue and kill the murderer of his parents. “It was...the difference between being dragged into the arena to face a battle to the death and walking into the arena with your head held high” (*HBP* 512). This is notably similar to the words of John Locke, who posited:

> Suppose a Man be carried, whilst fast asleep, into a Room, where is a Person he longs to see and speak with; and be there locked fast in, beyond his Power to get out: he awakes, and is glad to find himself in so desirable company, which he stays willingly in...is not this stay voluntary? I think, no Body will deny it: and yet being locked fast in, ‘tis evident he is not at liberty not to stay, he has not freedom to be gone. (qtd in Eberl 12)

Harry realizes that “some people, perhaps, would say that there was little to choose between the two ways, but...there was all the difference in the world” (*HBP* 512). It is not his passive fate to fulfill the prophecy, but his deliberate choice. Evidently the prophecy was made in the first place in anticipation of Voldemort and Harry’s choices, and is thus entirely dependent on those choices.

Never is Anakin's relationship to the prophecy of the Chosen One explained so overtly. We can only infer its nature from his behavior and what is said by him and other characters. Free will is never entirely discounted, but on the other hand there is frequent mention of destiny. If the "Chosen One" prophecy is a part of Anakin's inevitable destiny, then it can be assumed that he had no choice but to destroy the Sith and all else that the prophecy entails. This brings up yet another issue: if everything in Anakin's life is directed toward the fulfillment of that prophecy, then was it simply his fate to turn to the dark side and murder most of the Jedi? Was that the only way that he could bring about the eventual destruction of the Sith? The idea seems almost absurd, and yet it cannot be discounted as long as Anakin's actions are attributed to destiny. It also implies that Anakin cannot be held responsible for his evil deeds, nor can he be lauded for his good actions, if he had no choice in the matter. If, on the other hand, the idea of free will is introduced, then perhaps Anakin is resisting the prophecy by joining with Darth Sidious in his destruction of the Jedi Order, and only returns from the dark side at the very end when he chooses to oppose the Emperor and save his son.

There is no clear-cut answer to this, but several things offer a strong argument for the existence of free will, in spite of prophecies and the frequent mention of destiny. First of all, the character who confidently speaks of his ability to accurately see future events is not a good character, but rather the evil Emperor: "Everything is proceeding exactly as I have foreseen." And yet things do not ultimately occur as he planned. Luke does not join the Sith, the Rebellion prevails over the Empire, and Anakin forsakes his old master. At least for the Emperor, the choices of individuals have the power to alter previously foreseen events. Free will does matter.

But what if the Emperor was simply mistaken to begin with? Would free will still matter for someone else with an infallible future vision? This brings us back to the issue of the prophecy. One possible way of interpreting Anakin's fall is that he was not, in fact, inevitably destined to bring balance, and that his willful decision to join the Sith was an example of how he could have chosen not to. Obi-Wan Kenobi fairly says as much when he laments to a fallen Anakin: "You were the Chosen One! It was said that you would destroy the Sith, not join them! Bring balance to the Force, not leave it in darkness." By referring to the Chosen One in the past tense, he indicates that it is a lost hope, without any chance of fulfillment. For something that essentially rejects a prophecy, Obi-Wan's implication is curiously fatalistic. Now that Anakin has taken this particular path, he seems to say, he will have no choice but to continue along that path to its end. Certainly he holds to that view when speaking to Luke years later; there is no hope, in his mind, that Anakin can ever find the ability to turn back. Yet on the contrary, Anakin's ability to choose is paramount in his embracing of the dark side. It is obviously a bad choice, which results in both personal and widespread pain and suffering, yet it still can provide an affirmation that Anakin's life is not in the thrall of an implacable destiny.

Vader himself speaks of destiny frequently, and his usage perhaps unintentionally provides an opening for free will. He tells Luke that he must join him to destroy the Emperor at the end of *The Empire Srikes Back*, for "it is your destiny." He believes that Luke has no choice but to pursue the same path as his father. Yet when they face off again in *Return of the Jedi* and Luke refuses to fight him, saying that Vader will instead "be forced to kill me," Vader responds, "Then you will meet your destiny." Destiny, then, is not necessarily meant to be a single path that one must follow without any choice in the matter. Instead, it is a word for the eventual place where one's choices will lead. That is a notion that fundamentally includes free will. And Anakin leaves -- chooses to leave, by all appearances -- the path he has long followed when he turns back to the good side. By

doing so, he fulfills the prophecy and brings balance to the Force, but such an act was not necessarily inevitable. The victory over the Sith is far more meaningful if viewed through this light -- not as a passive act by an instrument of fate who lacked the free will to do otherwise, but as the active and courageous choice of a free being, a being who very clearly could have continued to choose the dark path. Like Harry, I prefer to see the prophecy of the Chosen One as being fulfilled by choice, and I believe it makes all the difference in the world.

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"Sins of the Father": the Slaughter of the Innocents
Theme in *Star Wars*
by Reihla

Few points have been more strenuously argued about *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, than the actions of Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker as he completes his descent into the dark realm of the Sith. From his oath to Sith Lord Darth Sidious through the final epic battle with Obi-Wan Kenobi on Mustafar we watch Anakin make devastating choices that include acts of unspeakable violence.

When faced with the question "what was Anakin's worst act in the film?" viewers come up with numerous scenarios, including his role in the death of Master Mace Windu and his violent reaction to his wife's imagined betrayal. Of all the points people raise, one scene stands out in the minds of fans and critics alike: Anakin's ruthless killing of the children who were students at the Jedi Temple.

We, the moviegoers, were horrified to see Anakin, newly christened Darth Vader, lead a battalion of Clone Troopers into the Temple. We knew from the orders he received that he was there to ensure no Jedi was allowed to live. What we didn't expect was a scene where he enters the darkened Jedi Council chamber only to be met by several younglings hiding there. One of the younglings asks him "Master Skywalker, there are too many of them, what do we do?" Anakin's chilling response is nonverbal. Despite the artful cut from the ignition of the lightsaber to the next scene, the magnitude of his action is clear and Lucas does not tiptoe around it. Those Jedi children died at his hand.

Most fans are aware that George Lucas is strongly family oriented and has said many times that he favored making each and every one of the saga films viewable by even the youngest family member capable of understanding the story. Yet in *Revenge of the Sith* he deliberately included the scene where Darth Vader ruthlessly slaughters children, garnering it a PG-13 rating and making it the only *Star Wars* movie in either trilogy with that distinction.

So many viewers want to know the answer to one question. Why? Why include something so monstrous in this film? Many feel that it served no purpose, that it was not necessary to move the plot forward. However, the fact that it was not left on the cutting room floor tells me that Lucas considered it pivotal to Anakin's fall. I feel it is such a departure from the normal that it must serve a specific purpose and I can only conclude that we are meant to analyze and learn from it.

There is no debating that the *Star Wars* mythos has become a strong part of American culture. It contains many of the same scenarios and universal truths common to myths from many other cultures, both the recent ones as well as those that are ancient. It is from the tradition of mythcrafting that George Lucas pulled the theme of the "slaughter of the innocents" and applied it to the saga. This paper is not to apologize for Anakin's actions or justify the unjustifiable in any way. What it will do is investigate why Lucas might have felt the inclusion of this scene was so important. It will endeavor to look analytically at the incident through historical and mythological perspectives.

Throughout mythology there are many stories about children who were killed by tyrannical rulers in an attempt to eliminate one specific child prophesied to overthrow them. Stories about prophets and deities such as Zoroaster, Krishna, Tammuz, Horus, Romulus & Remus, Oedipus, Hercules, Perseus & Adonis and Buddha all contain elements of this

“Dangerous Child Myth.” Lucas touches on elements of that specific myth when he speaks that he has foreseen that the “son of Skywalker” must be destroyed lest the boy prove to be the instrument of his destruction. For the sake of my topic, I’m going to steer clear of this specific myth and stick to the “slaughter of the innocents” aspect that often serves to accompany it. Luke’s destiny as the “Dangerous Child” could, and should, merit a paper all its own.

The Bible is perhaps the best known source of this story in America. Two stories, in particular, are familiar to just about everyone. In Exodus, we see the pharaoh of Egypt order the slaughter of all male children born to the Hebrew slaves to ensure that they would never outnumber and overthrow their Egyptian oppressors.1 Though the children were killed, one small boy escaped and grew to become Moses, a prophet who did eventually result in the pharaoh’s downfall. In the gospel of Matthew is another, similar story recounting the birth of Jesus. King Herod knew there were prophecies telling of the birth of a child that could ruin him. In response, he ordered the killing of all male babies under two years of age in Bethlehem.2 As we know, his plan failed in much the same way as the pharaoh of Egypt’s.

Throughout history, legends of those who choose to murder children are infamous. Bloody Mary Worth was rumored to have killed her own children. La Llorona, a spirit from a Mexican legend, also chose to murder her children. It is fairly common to find stories like these centered around a theme of dysfunctional love -- where a parent kills a child to spare them a difficult fate. It is a way of showing us how distorted obsessive love can become. In *Star Wars*, we see this same kind of thing, knowing that Anakin did all the things he did in the name of love. Perhaps the La Llorona story is particularly haunting in the context of Anakin’s tale because, in the end, she is condemned to wander searching for her lost children. This strikes a chord with Anakin fans because, as a disfigured Vader, he is similarly condemned to just such a half-existence.

Another famous murderer of her own children was the Greek wife Medea. Her situation differs from Bloody Mary and La Llorona in that she killed largely to get back at her husband. Where Medea murdered her own children, though, Anakin murdered other children to save his own. Though the stories are only vaguely similar, Medea’s story shares several common themes with the tale of Anakin.3 Both believe they are betrayed by those they love: Medea by her husband; Anakin by the Jedi. Both are passionate and given to impulsive acts that were motivated by anger or rage. Both are willing to sacrifice everything in the name of achieving their goals and both are doomed to exile for their crimes.4

It is true that myths are based upon the cultures which crafted them. To put it simply, many ancient cultures lacked the same respect for infant life that we have today. Infanticide was commonplace in Egypt, China, Scandanavia, Africa, Native America, India and others.5 In particular, Roman law gave the father the power of life and death over his children until that law was abolished and replaced it with the right to sell newborns into slavery.6

When we leave the realm of myth, which may or may not be based in fact, and cross into verifiable history, we find that it is full of accountings where innocent children -- as well as adults -- are killed so that rulers can gain or maintain power. The Huns, the Roman legions, the Crusaders, the Muslim sultans...all showed no mercy to any who stood in their path. Colonial Europeans killed millions of Africans to secure land. Even in North America, the policy of Manifest Destiny led to the killing of native peoples as settlers moved inland and took possession of the Louisiana Purchase. Perhaps the most blatant

and horrific modern examples of genocide were the Nazi regime's attempt to eliminate the Hebrew people and Stalin's purge of the Soviet nations. Both had the distinction of casualties numbering in the millions, and, though not specifically focused on the eradication of children, it is true that many of those killed were children. Each time in history, the theme was the same: wipe out those who are a threat to the rulers who wish to secure power and/or position.

This lust for control and influence was most definitely the primary motivation behind Palpatine's order to Darth Vader to kill every single Jedi. As he put it, failure to eliminate them to the last man would've resulted in endless civil war.

Some extreme fan reactions have people insisting that Anakin/Vader is no better than a serial killer. I don't think that is a fair comparison. Let's take, for example, the individual that many historians label the predecessor of today's modern serial killer.

The Baron Gilles de Rais was an aristocrat, soldier and national hero in 13th Century France.[7] He was later accused of, confessed to, and ultimately convicted for murdering potentially hundreds of children. J. K. Huysmans story, *Là-bas*, chronicles an author trying to write about Baron de Rais. In it, he faces the same dilemma we face when regarding Anakin's transformation into Vader. "The great difficulty, you see, is to explain how this man, who was a brave captain and a good Christian, all of a sudden became a sacrilegious sadist and a coward. Metamorphosed over night, as it were."[8]

In life, De Rais was described as "all that we imagine is required of the great knight in the age of chivalry: He was tall and handsome; he was skilled at arms, devoted, loyal, passionate and devout."[9] It could easily be said that Anakin shared all of these traits and that he was considered by much of the galactic populace to be the epitome of Jedi Knighthood.

But it is there that the similarities end. De Rais's motives were that of a typical serial killer. He was calculating and cold blooded, motivated to kill to fulfill perverse desires. He took great joy in ending the lives of his victims. Although the young Vader was willing to do whatever his master asked, he did not kill for selfish pleasure. His primary motivation was to save the life of his wife. Interesting to note is that both men had outside influences urging them to commit their awful crimes. For Gilles, it was an Italian named Prelati who convinced him that the blood of children had high worth to demons.[10] For Anakin, it was Palpatine.

I will not compare these two men in any other but these surface qualities because I believe that is where their similarities end. *Revenge of the Sith* makes it clear Anakin did not kill for joy or for personal satisfaction. In the novelization he is described as melancholy during his assault on the temple.[11] To put it simply, he killed for the same reason he had done every other thing he'd ever done in his life: out of duty. He did not torture his victims. He dispatched each one quickly and efficiently. The film supports this, specifically the introspection scene where Vader, his cheeks tear streaked, looks out on the Mustafar lava beds. If anything, it appears he was the one tortured by his own actions.

In all of this, there is one psychological point worthy of noting. The early years of Anakin's life on Tatooine were harsh. He was a slave, and as such most likely had to endure -- or watch others endure -- violence as a form of punishment. Dr. David Bakan, a psychologist specializing in behavioral sciences, has this to say about children who observe acts of violence: "The child who is witness to adult violence also quite rightly asks himself why he

may not use violence in order to make other people behave in accordance with his wishes." And goes on to say, "All he lacks is power. And as soon as he gets it, he takes it as right that he should use it. Thus he uses violence on the next generation of children, and so on."[12] Thus, where a Jedi raised solely in the temple might never have been tempted to violence, it is within the realm of possibility that Anakin, especially in his new guise as a Sith apprentice, would be susceptible in this area.

Now that the precedent for the "slaughter of the innocents" has been established in mythology and history, we can see where Lucas most likely drew his inspiration. From here, we need to consider Anakin's motivations and whether or not they ring true. A number of fans still state that they don't understand how Anakin, upon becoming Vader, so easily acquiesced to Palpatine's order to kill everyone -- including the children -- in the temple.

Simply put, in Anakin's overcrowded mind, the Jedi have betrayed everything they taught him by plotting to overthrow the republic and the chancellor. He believes they are the ultimate hypocrites. They've refused to make him a master despite the amazing scope of his powers and abilities. They are withholding secrets from him, such as the one he so desperately needs to keep his beloved wife from dying. He is fraught with considerable frustration and emotional conflict. Add to this, the unconditional acceptance Palpatine offered him, as well as the unlimited power of the Sith and the newborn realization that all other beings are pathetically weak. These things gel into the potential for the violence that Lucas showed us.

If that weren't enough, there is the fact that Sith and Jedi are mortal enemies. They share a "kill or be killed" relationship. Their philosophies are so diametrically opposed that each believes they cannot coexist. Anakin's initial reaction upon realizing Palpatine is the Sith Lord was a simple and direct "I will kill you!" to which Palpatine replied "For what?" Anakin's answer is equally direct: "You're a *Sith* Lord!"[13] In other words, they only have to exist to draw the wrath of the Jedi. Mace Windu reacted much the same way to Anakin's plea to intercede on Palpatine's behalf. He replied that the Sith was "too dangerous to be left alive."[14] The idea is further reinforced when Obi-Wan pleads with Yoda not to be made to kill Anakin. Yoda replies that he must, "Out of this misery, you must put him."[15]

This theme is carried through the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Jedi and Sith have only to meet to draw lightsabers. When Obi-Wan meets with Vader on the Death Star, there is no thought of *not* fighting and it is clear that one will be struck down before the duel ends; likewise with Luke and Vader in *The Empire Strikes Back*. When Obi-Wan explains to Luke that there is a path he must take Luke understands what he is being told to do. He replies unequivocally "I can't kill my own father." This attitude is uniquely Luke's in relation to the Sith because where the traditional Jedi are concerned, redemption for a dark lord never enters the equation.

Likewise, the Sith feel the Jedi must be destroyed. Sidious tells Anakin "Do not hesitate. Show no mercy. Leave no living creature behind."[16] Of course, the first priority of the Sith is to destroy their sworn enemy, but it could be that Palpatine's purpose is multi-layered. Simply put, he wished to test the loyalty of his new apprentice. He gave Anakin the most difficult order he could have: to go into his former home and kill all of his Jedi "family." The Jedi, as traitors to the Republic, had to be dealt with and the penalty for their treason was death. In his mind, there was no difference between Jedi adults and children. They all had to die to ensure the security of his hold over the republic.

Palpatine could easily have ordered an aerial strike on the Jedi Temple, or he could have sent the Clone Trooper Legion in without Vader leading it, but neither course of action would have assured him that his new apprentice truly would do anything he asked. He required two things of his protégé in order to, I believe, prove his loyalty. 1) Kill every Jedi in the temple -- including the younglings. In other words, erase your Jedi past and cement your future to mine. And 2) Be sure and kill your best friend and mentor, Obi-Wan Kenobi. In Palpatine's mind, if Anakin could do that then he was truly won over to the dark side. He needed to know the extent of Vader's loyalty at that point and Vader knew this. To refuse would have brought certain death both for himself and...in the end...for Padmé.

Anakin had to follow Palpatine's order. At that point he was out of choices. You don't pledge loyalty and service to the Sith and then refuse the first order you are given. Had he refused, his new alliance with the Dark Side -- the one necessary to save his wife -- would have been over. In the final scene on Mustafar before Padmé arrives, we are never told outright the reason for Anakin's tears. My suspicion is that he is reflective in those minutes, counting the cost of all he has done. Perhaps he is even mourning the loss of his own humanity.

The thing we had to know -- the thing that the scene with the children in the Jedi temple tells us -- is that the Dark Side is true evil and that it corrupts. We had to know how absolute that corruption was. We had to be shown that Anakin's transformation into Vader was real and it was final. That he can't ever go back. Killing children was the unredeemable act, meant to destroy any shred of sympathy we were feeling for Anakin. It breaks every tie Darth Vader had to the good man we knew as Anakin Skywalker.

I liken the Dark Side to a form of insanity. Once you start down that path, it takes hold of you and transforms your values. You "think inward, only about yourself" and everything else takes a back seat to getting what you want. The fact that Anakin slaughters children only underlines the instability of his ideology and his insanity. Think of the mentality a suicide bomber must surely have. He doesn't care about anything except the fulfillment of the grander scheme of things. The goal, usually erasing his enemy from existence, must be met and carried out.

Numerous papers have been written on Campbellian themes in *Star Wars*. It is particularly notable that the Campbellian hero must fail. He must fall into a dark abyss, a place of damnation from which there seems to be no escape. For Anakin/Vader, I believe the slaughter of the innocents becomes that black hole, the stepping stone for worse evil deeds.

Lucas has said on many occasions that *Star Wars* is Anakin's story. It is the story of how any man, even one destined for good, can make poor choices that place them in a situation that seems unforgivable. It is a story of how forgiveness is available through love, to even those who seem beyond redemption.

Most people argue that showing the killing of children was unnecessary. Perhaps from their perspective this is true, they did not need to see it to believe Anakin was truly evil. I believe it was necessary, but even if Lucas didn't need to show us in quite such detail, I believe it serves another, perhaps higher, purpose. I believe it was a firm statement on the nature of repentance and true forgiveness.

Yes, Lucas could have had the clone troopers carry out the slaughter of the younglings, but without that one particular act, the enormity of Darth Vader's redemption is trivialized.

His salvation had to come from a place we didn't think he could return from, a place we weren't capable of going in order to bring him back. Only unconditional love, and a touch of the divine, could have accomplished such a thing. The "slaughter of the innocents" theme is included in Anakin's journey to show us the extent of the miracle it took to bring Anakin back from the abyss and banish Darth Vader forever.

Dedicated to the fan discussions at TheForce.Net and at The Anakin Skywalker Homepage, who provided many insights and ideas that contributed to the content of this paper.

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The Tragedy of *Star Wars*
by Christine Anderson

Note: The author presented this paper as a lecture at the Pittsburgh ComiCon on April 22, 2006.

The idea that the Original Trilogy of *Star Wars* is a modern example of the classic hero journey of mythology is one that has been long accepted and discussed. However, the Prequel Trilogy does not fit into that mythos. Instead, a far better fit would be to see the Prequel Trilogy as a modern telling of a Greek Tragedy, with its tragic hero doomed to fall through his own fatal flaws. George Lucas himself compared *Star Wars* to Greek Tragedy.1 When examined, the elements of Greek Tragedy are clearly present in the story of the rise and fall of Anakin Skywalker.

Only the movies of the Prequel Trilogy will be examined for comparison. Although the Expanded Universe certainly adds depth to the *Star Wars* saga, canon alone will be used to demonstrate the Prequels as a modern example of classical Greek Tragedy and Anakin Skywalker as a Tragic Hero.

Before looking at Lucas's story, it is important to mention the person from whom we have the majority of our knowledge of Greek tragedy, Aristotle. A Greek philosopher who wrote many books on a wide range of subjects, his *Poetics* has become the primary source on the elements that exist in a Tragedy.2 It is from his writings that we establish the standards for what is considered a Greek Tragedy, most of which are found within the Prequel Trilogy.

(It is an interesting side note that the original Greek tragedies were performed at a festival, at which playwrights would present a trilogy of stories, usually interrelated. Just as Lucas presents his stories in trilogy form.3)

There are four main elements of a classic Greek Tragedy.4 First, the plot, character and setting are all intertwined and related. Second, events occur within a short period of time. Third, the theme involves relationship between a person's fate and the person's free will. Fourth, the protagonist of the story is a Tragic Hero.

As Obi-Wan Kenobi once observed, all are part of a symbiotic circle. In a Greek tragedy there are no sub-plots, all events concern a single plot. All characters are related. The setting is limited, with all action occurring in one place. In the Prequel Trilogy, there is only one plot, the rise and fall of Anakin Skywalker. Everything that happens is connected in one way or another to this.

In *The Phantom Menace*, the invasion of Naboo serves to lead the Jedi to young Anakin, introduce him to his future bride, and bring him to the attention of Palpatine -- setting in motion the events which will lead to his becoming one of the most powerful Jedi and introducing him to the two people which will have the most to do with his fall, Padmé and Palpatine.

The events of *Attack of the Clones* plant the seeds of his fall: the temptation of a relationship with Padmé, the first Dark action in the slaughter of the Tusken, his growing friendship with Palpatine, and the start of his alienation from the Jedi, as seen in his

occasional conflicts with and defiance of Obi-Wan. The clones discovered in this film will become the very troops Anakin will one day lead against the Jedi.

In the *Revenge of the Sith*, we see Anakin's fall from grace. He betrays his comrades the Jedi, destroy the democratic Republic, and contributes to the death of his wife. By the end of *Sith*, Anakin will have lost everything that once had meaning for him, completing the tragic tale of his fall from hero to villain. Even the beginnings of the Rebel Alliance, part of the deleted scenes of the film, concern Anakin. For it will be through their involvement in the Rebel Alliance that Anakin meets his children, who will eventually lead him to his redemption.

As was mentioned, in a Greek Tragedy all characters are related. This does not refer to biological relations, but to an interconnectedness. Although, many of the characters in the Prequel Trilogy do have family ties, through blood, marriage and adoption. There are far less than six degrees of separation in the *Star Wars* Universe. Even characters who do not know each other directly in the Prequels have an impact on each other's lives. For example, Chewbacca and Anakin never meet in the Prequels. However, the Wookiee assists in the survival of Yoda, who will later train Anakin's son. It is Chewbacca, along with Han Solo, who assists Anakin's son and Anakin's former master in the rescue of Anakin's daughter. It's a very small galaxy.

Finally, there is the setting, which in a Greek Tragedy is limited, with the action occurring in one place. The action in *Star Wars* occurs on several different planets, but considering the story is set in a galactic Republic, there are only a few planets on which the main action occurs: Tatooine, Coruscant, Naboo, Geonosis, Kamino, and Mustafar. Of these, two are primary locations which are seen in all three of the Prequels: Tatooine and Coruscant. One must ask, is Tatooine really the furthest point from the bright center of the galaxy, when so much of critical importance occurs there?

Another element of a Greek Tragedy is the events of the story occur within a short period of time. Judging the passage of time in the *Star Wars* Universe has always been a challenge. No calendar or specific measure of time is mentioned. There are no convenient "Star Dates," if you will pardon the reference, in which we are informed when events occur. On what day of the week do Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan arrive to negotiate with the Trade Federation? What time did Anakin arrive at Obi-Wan's briefing, other than late? Even a natural measure of sunrise to sunset is unreliable since the action moves from planet to planet. We know that several years pass between individual films in the Prequels only by passing references made by the characters and observing that certain characters have gotten older. Anakin is no longer a child, Obi-Wan now has gray at his temples.

Nevertheless, within the films, the audience gets the sense that events are moving quickly. There is no sense that a long period of time has passed within each film. How long did Padmé and Anakin stay hidden on Naboo? They arrive, picnic, have dinner, Anakin dreams, and they depart. No doubt these events occurred over several days, but within the film it feels as if they occur in close sequence. In the question and answer column of a recent *Star Wars Insider* magazine[5], a reader asked how much time did the events of *Revenge of the Sith* take? The response was there were only nine days between the supposed rescue of Palapatine from the Seperatists and the death of Padmé in childbirth. Events move quickly within each of the Prequel films.

The third element of a Greek Tragedy is the question of free will versus fate. Do the actions of the characters cause their futures to occur or were their fates predetermined? Is

it demanded by de gods, as Jar Jar said? Do they choose the paths they walk or are the very actions they take fated to lead to a destiny decided long before they were born? Can one change one's destiny or will the very attempt to do so cause the destiny to happen?

One of best known Greek Tragedies is Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*.[6] When Oedipus is born it is prophesized that he will kill his father and marry his mother. To prevent such a horrible thing from happening, he is left as an infant on a hillside to die of exposure. He is found and raised to adulthood ignorant of his true parentage. As an adult, he is told by the Oracle the same prophecy, that he will kill his father and marry his mother. To prevent this, he leaves the couple he believes are his parents and travels to a distant land. There he kills a man and marries the man's widow. These two turn out to be his biological parents, fulfilling the prophecy. All attempts to circumvent the prophecy resulted in its happening.

Is Anakin likewise destined to fall or do his own actions lead him to his end? There are two main prophecies that influence the life of Anakin. The prophecy of the Chosen One and Anakin's dream of Padmé's death.

The first prophecy is that of the Chosen One, who will bring balance to the Force. Belief that Anakin will fulfill this prophecy is what motivates Qui-Gon, and later Obi-Wan, to defy the Jedi Council and train Anakin as a Jedi. It is perhaps knowledge of this status that leads him to such arrogance and overconfidence in his own abilities. In the most literal sense, this prophecy was fulfilled, in large part through Anakin's actions. By the end of *Revenge of the Sith*, there are equal numbers of representatives of both the Light and the Dark Sides of the Force. Two Sith and two Jedi. Was this Anakin's destiny? Were all of his actions leading to this, despite his intentions? The prophecy itself it vague and the Jedi themselves seem to have debated its meaning, questioning if they have misunderstood it.[7]

The second prophecy is Anakin's dream of Padmé's death in childbirth. This is a much easier comparison with Oedipus's situation. Anakin's actions to prevent the prophecy from occurring, like Oedipus, instead result in the very thing he wanted to avoid. His quest for enough power to keep Padmé from dying lead him into a devil's bargain with Palapatine, trading the lives of the Jedi for the life of his beloved wife. It is in horror of what he has done, however, that Padmé rejects Anakin. That rejection leads to Anakin's attacking Padmé and eventually, Padmé's death in childbirth. Is it fate or free will that determined Anakin's destiny? Within a Greek Tragedy, this question is a common theme.

The final element is that of the Tragic Hero. In *Poetics*, Aristotle described the Tragic Hero as "neither a paragon of virtue and justice nor [undergoing] the change to misfortune through any real badness or wickedness but because of some mistake."[8]

This is an excellent description of Anakin. His journey to the Dark side is paved with good intentions. He is not a perfect person. He is quick tempered, short sighted, and his judgment could be considered flawed, but he is not truly evil. He did not take joy in the slaughter of the Jedi nor in the death of the Seperatist leaders. Rather he does what he feels is necessary for greater good to establish a less corrupt government and to save Padmé's life.

There are four basic traits of a Tragic Hero in a Greek Tragedy: Position, Tragic Flaw (Hamartia), Reversal, and Recognition.[9] All of which can be seen in Anakin.

The first of the four traits is position. The Tragic Hero is a good person, in a high ranking position in society. He is respected by others and has much to lose. "He acts out of good

intentions."[10] The first part of the Prequel Trilogy shows how Anakin rose from his humble beginnings as a slave to become a respected Jedi. He is mentored by the Supreme Chancellor of the Republic and apprenticed to one of the most respected Knights of the Jedi Order, who becomes his best friend. Although wary of him, the Jedi Council acknowledges his skill. By the start of *Revenge of the Sith*, Anakin has become a hero throughout the Republic for his bravery during the Clone Wars. Although a secret, he has a beautiful wife who is expecting their first child.

As mentioned earlier, much of what Anakin does is motivated by good intentions. He sees that there is corruption in the government and he wants to support the establishment of a more stable government. He wants to protect the life of his wife. Unfortunately, his good intentions lead to bad decisions, which will cost him all that he holds dear.

Part of the reason for the Tragic Hero's fall, according to Aristotle, was Hamartia. This is commonly translated as fatal flaw or character flaw. However, a closer translation would be "missing the mark."[11] Because of his shortcomings, the Tragic Hero is unable to reach the goals he has set himself.

The most common flaw is that of pride. The Tragic Hero believes that his abilities are enough to defy the will of the gods as revealed through prophecy and to overcome any obstacles between himself and his goal. Anakin certainly has the flaw of pride. He often speaks arrogantly of his power, declaring that he will one day be so powerful as to prevent people from dying and how much more powerful he is than other Jedi, even his own teacher, Obi-Wan.

I would propose, however, that Anakin's main flaw, the one that contributes most to his downfall, is not his pride, but his fear of being alone. Yoda cautions Anakin that "fear of loss is a path to the Dark Side." Anakin has a deep need for relationships with others. His first act of Dark violence is to slaughter the Tusken raiders in response to their murder of his mother. He violates the directive of his mission in order to rescue Obi-Wan. The rules of non-attachment are broken so he can marry Padmé. The Jedi are betrayed and murdered so that Anakin can gain the power to prevent Padmé from dying in childbirth. Whether pride or fear of being alone, Anakin's fatal flaw will lead him to actions that will destroy all that is important to him and bring down the Jedi and the Republic.

The third aspect of the Tragic Hero is Reversal. The hero's life of happiness is destroyed. All that remains is suffering and misery. Anakin's wife dies because of his actions. Anakin believes his unborn child has died with Padmé. The man Anakin once considered like a father to him, Obi-Wan Kenobi, is now his enemy. Anakin himself is now crippled, maimed, and kept alive only through an oppressive life support suit. He is alone, except for Palpatine, who rules over an Empire more corrupt and oppressive than the Republic ever was.

Finally, the last aspect of the Tragic Hero is Recognition. Although it occurs too late to prevent disaster, the hero realizes how he has caused his own downfall. After the horrified scream of denial upon learning he has killed Padmé, this aspect is found primarily in the body language of Anakin, now Vader. Standing isolated on the bridge of a star destroyer, encased in the life support system that now imprisons him, he crosses his arms across his chest, his head bowed. An image of regret, the hero who now knows he has fallen to a tragedy of his own making.

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Sidious the Serpent
by ami-padme

The devil has long served as the personification of evil in both religion and literature throughout the ages. In different cultures, histories, and stories, he has taken on a variety of easily recognizable forms and characteristics. Even in tales that do not specifically have Satan himself as a character -- or are not based upon the beliefs of real-world religion -- the devil is often found in characters meant to embody the archetype. This is true of the *Star Wars* saga, where the character of Palpatine serves as the true devil figure. As the Emperor and Dark Lord of the Sith, Palpatine is more than just another "bad guy." He is the "bad guy" and takes on multiple markers of the devil throughout the films. *Star Wars* is often cast as a basic story of good versus evil; by relating Palpatine to the definition of evil, that main thrust of the story is strengthened and deepened.

To expound on the basic point, Palpatine acts as the most direct personification of evil in the *Star Wars* story. Palpatine is a Sith, one of "[a]n ancient order of Force-practitioners devoted to the dark side…a menace long thought extinct."1 The dark side essentially is evil -- the audience learns that it consists of many (if not all) of the negative traits, emotions, and resulting actions that people experience and work to conquer or control. The dark side is based in selfishness and impulse, in lust for power and control. It is destructive and corrosive to people and the systems they have created; it feeds off confusion, anger, and suffering. The Sith are followers and users of the dark side, cultivating all of these negatives in a quest to attain supremacy and might in the galaxy. Palpatine is one of four Sith characters in the movies, but he is the only Sith Master the audience ever sees. He rules the Order during the 30-plus years between Episodes I and VI. Maul, Tyranus, and Vader all follow him, to varying degrees of slavishness. Until he defeat in *Return of the Jedi*, Palpatine is firmly in control of the Sith and his apprentices, masterminding a number of wide-reaching plots.

Wikipedia states: "The Devil is the name given to a supernatural entity, who...is the central embodiment of evil."2 In multiple religions (and in religion-based literature), the devil is God's arch-nemesis, in opposition to all that is good. He commands Hell, or the Underworld, holding dominion over his subjects -- those condemned to eternal suffering -- and his followers, including demons, spirits, and worshippers. "In Christian teaching," according to the Religion Facts website, "the leader of the rebellious angels was Satan, who [became] humanity's chief adversary."3 As with Palpatine, the central point is not simply that the devil is "bad," but that he is true and pure evil.

One of the manifestations of that malevolence is the ability of Satan, or a Satan-like character, to seduce, tempt, and otherwise successfully corrupt people and the systems they inhabit. Often, they are able to do this without their victims fully realizing what is happening. Palpatine, of course, is quite infamous for this, particularly with regard to his conversion of Anakin Skywalker to the dark side of the Force, and his later, unsuccessful attempt with Anakin's son, Luke Skywalker. George Lucas himself says of *Revenge of the Sith*, that Anakin "made a deal with the Devil...and lost."4 Palptine spent years cultivating a relationship with Anakin, quietly planting the seeds that would later lead the young Jedi to reject his Order and the Republic he had served for most of his life, as well as his sense of right and wrong. There was no such luxury of time with Luke, however, he (with Vader's help) was still nearly successful in getting him to succumb, showing the strength of Palpatine's ability to confuse and ruin otherwise good people. It also can be assumed that Count Dooku went through a process at least generally similar to that of the

Skywalkers when changing from a respected Jedi Master to a Sith apprentice by the events of *Attack of the Clones*; his biography on StarWars.com states that "Dooku had been corrupted by the power of the dark side. After his departure from the Jedi order, Dooku was seduced to the dark side by Darth Sidious…"[5]

More subtle examples also exist. For instance, in *The Phantom Menace*, Palpatine leads an unknowing Padmé astray as he maneuvers her into taking a critical step in his scheme to rule the Galactic Republic. His discussions with her upon her arrival to Coruscant are designed to lead her to the conclusion that a no-confidence vote is her planet's best chance of gaining the government's help with the recent invasion. During the session in the Senate chamber, Palpatine drives his point home with a few careful and well-placed words to Padmé, as she watches the Chancellor fail to act. The imagery of this scene evokes a clear image of the devil -- Palpatine whispers in Padmé's ear much as the devil, in the guise of a snake, whispers to Eve as she considers whether to eat the fruit in the Garden of Eden.[6] More generally, Palpatine manipulates the entire Republic, pushing it into war with the Separatists, staying in office well beyond his term limits, and finally, creating an oppressive Empire to the delight of his deluded Senate colleagues.

Satan delights in the downfall of people and the ruin of systems, and seems to constantly work to pull people from the right path. In the Bible he is referred to directly as "the tempter"[7] and Wikipedia adds, "None escape his temptations. He is continually soliciting men to sin."[8] The Christian Bible contains several stories of the devil's efforts to tempt people -- including Eve, of course, and a famous failure with Christ.[9] In the Old Testament, the fate of Israel and the Jewish people as a nation often related to their leaders' or fighters' decisions to listen to God's instructions and follow His will.

Palpatine's duplicitous nature is not only key to his ability to tempt and lead others astray, it also plays into his overall physical appearance and mannerisms, and the look of the devil is an important facet of the archetype. Though Satan's physical appearance is only described once in the Bible (as a particularly fantastic monster-creature in the book of Revelations), many traditional ideas of his appearance have emerged in art and literature. The devil has horns, hindquarters, and a forked tail. He carries a strident spear.[10] He has red skin and a generally frightening visage. However, he apparently has the ability to change his appearance -- his coming to Eve as a snake suggests that, and it is unknown how he appeared to Christ.

Palpatine also relies on being able to control his look, and eventually, his look reflects his inner, evil nature. Palpatine the politician is a perfectly normal, even kindly, non-threatening older man. He mentors both Padmé and Anakin, and appears to be well-liked and trusted by those he works with and rules over. Sidious the Dark Lord of the Sith is a dark, hidden figure, lost within the black robes that constantly conceal him. He speaks with a deeper, more deliberate, and more threatening voice. In Episode III, his face is badly disfigured and his voice is badly distorted by his own Force lightning during his duel with Mace Windu. He maintains this look, without any attempt at the further pretense of the Palpatine persona's appearance, for the rest of the saga as his ruthless plans are finally executed.

Aside from revealing Palpatine's true nature, the fight with Mace Windu -- and with three other Jedi Masters -- shows Palpatine's great power in the Force. The devil also has great power. The devil cannot claim final victory over God (and is eventually portrayed as defeated following a large battle against God[11]), and in *Star Wars*, the dark side is finally defeated by the Light, with Palpatine destroyed, evil often gives the impression of winning

important battles, despite losing the overall war. The power of the devil in religion provides a heightened sense of drama in the battle of individuals and their souls, and in the context of *Star Wars*, Palpatine needs to be powerful to create a credible threat to venerable institutions such as the Jedi Order and the Galactic Republic. He also must be a Master to a rabid fighter like Maul, a seasoned Jedi like Dooku, and a powerful but troubled Anakin, all while responding to the Jedi-Separatist-Rebellion threats to his rule, and running a Republic and Empire. His power, and his ability to challenge the "good guys" and their institutions (though ultimately losing to them) is a key part of the story, and to his devil-like figure.

Palpatine/Darth Sidious is one of the *Star Wars* saga's most memorable and intriguing characters, because of his powerful, duplicitous, deceptive, frightening, and evil natures. His connection to the religious and literary traditions of the devil helps bring depth to the contemporary story told in these six films.

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Thwarted by the Dark Side:
Poor Leadership and Vader's Legacy
by Michelle Drumm

The effort to understand and account for the varying styles of leadership, and the effectiveness of each in a particular situation, has resulted in a wealth of literature. Over the years, new theories and models of leadership have emerged, each purporting to account for factors that affect leadership and, in turn, followership. Scholars of the subject have examined leaders from history and business to analyze their styles, their strengths and weaknesses, and have attempted to trace a link between their legacies as leaders and the practices they engaged. The assumption here is that it is possible to learn by examples -- both good and bad -- and mimic or build upon successful approaches, and shy away from those that had devastating effects. Rarely, however, has anyone taken to explore the world of fictional leaders, and attempted to learn from examples not real, but imagined.

Fiction, in all its forms, allows for creators to draw out characters that are believable because they reflect real, lived experience -- proportionally or through caricature. Screenwriters and novelists, poets and playwrights all have at one point or another worked for someone else. They have lived through work relationships and have learned from them. When they engage in the creative process, they write what they know, what they have seen, and what they have learned. Their creative work, then, while it may engage in the use of caricature to accentuate or amplify strengths and weaknesses, is a record of years of participation in working relationships and/or a record of history lessons well-learned. Additionally, the characters they create resonate with the consumers of their art because of shared experiences and shared values. These fictional characters are not free from the forces that control real relationships but are a product of them; they do not lead in a vacuum, but are drawn into a world that is similar to our own.

That said, the ability of fictional characters to provide instructive examples of leadership styles is evident. As mentioned above, caricature can be helpful because the qualities in which we are interested are amplified, which allows us to read them easily, and to interpret their success or failure as appropriate. In recent decades, a spate of pop culture representations of good and bad leadership has erupted. Homer Simpson can be seen as the ineffective father; *Braveheart*'s William Wallis is the valiant and inspirational motivator; most of the character's from *Office Space* would be fired in a well-led business operation; J. K. Rowling's Dumbeldore manages to ward off evil, keep spirits high (pun intended), and to engage the hearts, minds, and imaginations of hundreds of young students in the *Harry Potter* novels. However, despite this abundance of examples, perhaps George Lucas has succeeded in creating one of the greatest cautionary tales for the aspiring leader in his portrayal of Darth Vader's devastating reign of terror. Darth Vader embodies traits that make most contemporary leadership scholars cringe. To illustrate this point, below are several leadership traits considered to be admirable or desirable in a leader, and a brief analysis of how Darth Vader meets, or more commonly, does not meet the requirement. Through this analysis, it should be apparent that Darth Vader, while perhaps an excellent manager, is hardly a skilled leader.

Power versus Authority

Joseph Cangemi suggests that the true leader must receive his power from his followers, but in most circumstances, leaders in fact wield authority over their followers. To further explain the critical difference between power and authority, he writes, "Authority grants the

legitimate right of a leader to entice, even force, others to do what is considered important to achieve. Authority gives the right to coerce, punish, or reward individuals in the leader's endeavor to achieve goals (161)." However, "Power is the individual's capacity to move others, to entice others, to persuade and encourage others to attain specific goals...it is the capacity to influence and motivate people (161)." He points out that authority is merely granted by an organization, while power is awarded by those who will follow. This difference is crucial in that the way in which followers perceive their relationship with their leaders is defined by whether they regard their leaders as powerful, or merely authoritative. Followers will happily follow those who they have empowered, but will only grudgingly follow a person instilled with authority who has no power.

Darth Vader is of course a man endowed with authority -- great authority -- over his followers, but devoid of any real power over them. While many Imperial commanders fear him, they do not genuinely believe in him. Consider, for example, the sequence in the first movie, *Star Wars: A New Hope*, in which, despite his handed-down authority, Vader encounters resistance from one of the commanders. Vader cautions the men not to be too dependent upon the destructive power of the Death Star, as that "technological terror" is no match for the power of the force. While Vader receives his authority from the Emperor Palpatine, the force can be considered his source of power. Yet, the commander says to him, "Don't try to frighten us with your sorcerer's ways, Lord Vader. Your sad devotion to that ancient religion has not helped you conjure up the stolen data tapes..." To which Darth Vader responds, "I find your lack of faith disturbing," while nearly strangling the commander to death. The behavior of the commander reveals that he does not want to grant Vader power, but he does recognize Vader's authority over him, as acknowledged by his use of Vader's title of Lord. Vader's authority is inherent in his position. His attempt to lead by a personal strength that could be a true source of power fails miserably, and he is then left to depend upon his hollow authority.

Inspiring Trust

Most scholars of leadership will agree that in order to lead effectively, it is necessary for the leader to win the trust of his followers. Cangemi suggests that successful leaders exhibit traits that lead their followers to believe that they should be trusted (166). Ira Chaleff goes as far as to say, "...trust is the single most important factor on which followers evaluate a leader (27)." Warren Bennis delves further into this phenomenon when he writes, "A leader creates a climate of trust...To do this, reward people for disagreeing, reward innovation, and tolerate failure. Don't fire people because they goof (97)." It is the inspiration of trust that compels followers to imbue their leaders with the power spoken about above. Without trust and faith, a leader will have no followers, though she may have subjects, in the monarchic sense of the word.

Again, we see Darth Vader is not one to inspire trust in his followers. Rather, he controls by fear, building an environment charged with anxiety that is not conducive to productivity. For example, in response to the challenge offered by the member of the Imperial command mentioned above, Vader nearly strangles the man to death, which has a visible impact on the others at the table. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Vader goes so far as to kill another one of his followers for a miscalculation that reveals the Imperial presence to the Rebel Alliance on the planet Hoth, saying, "You have failed me for the last time, Admiral." Immediately, he turns to a shaken nearby Captain and appoints him to the position of admiral -- an outcome that makes the new Admiral visibly uncomfortable. Vader is not one to tolerate failure, nor to reward his followers for disagreeing. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for Vader to do anything more than merely control his followers by force or

coercion. With this approach, Vader is doomed to ultimate failure in that his people are merely following orders and not fighting for what they truly believe in.

Shared Values/Ability to Communicate Vision

Of course, the issue of what people believe raises further difficulties for our anti-hero. The creation and communication of a shared vision is another trait commonly considered essential to success in leadership. Chaleff suggests that "Followers and leaders both orbit around the purpose; followers do not orbit around their leader (41)." He explains that the core purpose (shared values) is the glue that binds participants in pursuit of a shared goal. Bennis writes, "To make dreams apparent to others, and to align people with them, leaders must communicate their vision (84)." This is of course not as simple as merely telling your desired followers your intentions -- rather this means engaging them on a personal and passionate level. To do this, one must have certain shared values; otherwise the vision will be devoid of meaning. Gary Wills sums this up when he writes, "A leader whose qualities do not match those of potential followers is simply irrelevant: the world is not playing his or her game (65)," and later, "A corrupt people is not responsive to virtuous leadership (66)." The flip side of this is equally true: virtuous people are not likely to respond to corrupt leadership. To communicate a vision to your followers, you have to speak their language.

It is this point that Vader seems to miss entirely. He knows what he wants, but he fails to recruit others who feel passionately the same as he does. His vision is one that he does indeed passionately pursue, however, his most desired follower is one that does not share the same core values. Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader's son and most desired companion in becoming master of the universe, is a man that honors self-knowledge and self-control, whereas Vader has lost his own self in the dark side of the Force and desires control over others. Young Skywalker even goes so far as to tell Darth Vader that he is out of touch with his true self. In *Return of the Jedi*, Vader lashes out at Luke telling him that the name of Anakin Skywalker has no meaning for him, to which Luke responds by saying, "It is the name of your true self; you've only forgotten." This we later find out is true. In the meantime, however, Vader persists in trying to sell Luke on a vision that is the complete opposite of what he would desire, and is based on conquest and control. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Vader says to Luke, "Luke, you can destroy the Emperor...Join me and together we can rule the galaxy as father and son." Vader's value system is one that views authority and control over others as the ultimate goal -- a goal that Luke does not share, which results in Luke's steadfastness.

Conclusion

The closing sequences of *Return of the Jedi* reveal that it is the denial of self and absolute power that drives potentially good men to be bad leaders. Luke, perhaps by virtue of his mentoring relationship with the immortal transformational leader Yoda, is able to achieve the impossible by driving Vader to find the goodness within himself again, and against all odds. Vader was at one point the virtuous and integrity-filled Anakin Skywalker, but he was seduced by the dark side of the force and grew further and further away from his true self. The consequences of that behavior destroyed him.

In terms of the most basic definitions, Darth Vader is no leader; rather, he is a manager, capable of obtaining results. The question is, of course, are the results admirable? In short, they are not. Vader may, to paraphrase Peter Drucker, do things right, but he rarely does the right thing. He is able to control subordinates, but only by fear. He is able to marshal the troops, but is unable to inspire them to self-directed action. And, most unfortunately, he is unable to win the support of those he needs most to achieve his vision.

These factors alone can foretell the failure of an over-zealous aspiring leader, but perhaps the most striking aspect of this extended metaphor relates to one of Peter Drucker's convictions. Drucker has said, "The test of any leader is not what he or she accomplishes. It is what happens when they leave the scene. It is the succession that is the test. If the enterprise collapses the moment [the leaders] leave, that is not leadership. That is – very bluntly – deception. Vader's death at the end of *Return of the Jedi* is quite literally the end of the Empire. Not having inspired others to his vision, Vader's legacy of the Empire is nothing. The Rebel Alliance, led by such inspirational leaders as Yoda, Luke Skywalker, and Princess Leia Organa, is able to endure and to conquer darkness.

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"Distressing Damsel":
Padmé Amidala as Fairy Tale Heroine
by Lady Aeryn

Star Wars, with its elements of royalty, supernaturally powerful beings, star-crossed romance, and battles against evil, has been labeled by many over the years as a modern-day myth, and modern-day fairy tale. One of its more openly fairy tale-like threads is in the life of prequel heroine and Skywalker matriarch Padmé Amidala.

The term "fairy tale" is often used interchangeably with "myth," and the two do share similarities. Fairy tale and myth both involve a person thrust outside their normal realm of experience on a journey to fulfill a greater goal, and both illustrate important stages or lessons in a human's life.1 However, myth and fairy tale do have significant differences. Fairy tale scholar Marcia Lane describes one thus: "A fairy tale... happens in the past tense, and... is not tied to any specifics. If it happens 'at the beginning of the world,' then it is a myth."2 The title card "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away" alone fits Lane's stipulations: *Star War*s is set in the past, but not a specific period. Secondly, events affecting the characters of myths are portrayed as highly out of the ordinary in the context of the story, whereas in fairy tales magical events could happen to anyone.3 In several ways, this is the case with *Star Wars*. Things like duels with light swords, beings manipulating objects without touching them, a child as queen of an entire world – while not exactly everyday occurrences – are certainly not unheard of. Third, unlike myths, the hero/heroine of a fairy tale has no magic powers, and is a "mere" mortal who at some point in her journey receives help from figures who do possess "magical" abilities.4

Such is the case for Padmé, who, unlike the majority of prequel characters, is not a Jedi and has no significant aptitude for the Force, the source of the "magic" in the *Star Wars* galaxy. She does meet a number of Jedi in her journey, who will provide her aid and – in the case of Anakin Skywalker – romance. Though *Star Wars* is ultimately Anakin's tale, her own thread is still key in it and a very serviceable rendering of a fairy tale heroine's story, particularly in the transformation Padmé undergoes.

Many traditional feminine-centric fairy tales have a girl on the verge of puberty as their heroine. These tales typically follow/represent the girl's transformation to womanhood through the stages of her conflict with an evil figure, often a witch or other hideous creature, who has thrust her on that very journey in an attempt to destroy her.5

When describing Padmé as a "fairy tale heroine," this does *not* mean the swooning, passive ones shown in early Disney films, where Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, and Snow White do little but wait for a prince to save them. These are not the original tales, but a continuation of a trend from 19th century Victorian England, when fairy tales were rewritten to domesticate feisty heroines to demure personas considered more socially acceptable for women in that era. The original versions' heroines were frequently active agents in escaping her own predicament.6 The Queen in "Rumpelstiltskin" uses her wit to escape losing her new baby to the dwarf who demands it in payment for saving her life7; Beauty sacrifices herself to the Beast's captivity to ensure her father's safety and is the agent of the Beast's redemption8; the German Cinderella ("Aschenputtel") does not simply mope when not allowed to go to the ball, but finds a way to go anyway.9 The role of the prince in these tales is not to swoop in and save the heroine from evil, but to provide the means – if the heroine chooses – to a secure future for her after she faces that evil herself, usually through marriage (and/or the possibility of motherhood).10

Padmé fits many basic personal traits found in the typical fairy tale heroine. In *The Phantom Menace*, she is queen, handmaid, and peasant, all archetypes of fairy tale heroines. Fairy tale heroines are always ascribed with astounding beauty[11], and even in her peasant garb Anakin describes Padmé as one of the “most beautiful creatures in the universe.” She is young, virginal, hard working, and good-hearted. Like pre-Victorian heroines, she is proactive in working against her crises in all three of her films. In *Menace* she initiates the replacement of a Chancellor she believes is not assertive enough in helping her besieged world, and leaves the safety of Coruscant to lead a bold rebellion to free Naboo. In *Attack of the Clones*, she disregards Obi-Wan Kenobi’s plans for finding her would-be assassin as passive and forms another plan to directly draw out her attacker; later she refuses to sit on comparatively safe Tatooine when she realizes Obi-Wan is in danger on Geonosis. Finally in *Revenge of the Sith*, when she recognizes Obi-Wan is going to kill her husband (who has turned to the Dark Side), she again leaves safety to try to warn Anakin and pull him from the Dark Side, in a desperate attempt to preserve the family she knows is slipping away from her. She even rebuffs Anakin’s claims about “saving” her from his nightmares – Padmé is not a damsel who needs her prince to "save" her; all she wants or needs is his love.

The aforementioned evil “witch” figure in *Star Wars* is, of course, Palpatine/Darth Sidious. He is the saga’s ultimate embodiment of wickedness, who orchestrates the events that endanger everyone and forcibly and unintentionally spurs the heroine to her transformation. Which, ultimately (and also unintentionally), will lead to the witch’s demise.[12] The "witch" is often an authority figure in the heroine’s life: stepmother, wicked parent, etc. Either one or both of the heroine’s birth parents are already largely absent in the tale; Padmé has long since separated from hers by the time of *Menace*. Palpatine is the closest to a mentor figure shown for Padmé, whose counsel she seeks to help free Naboo from the Trade Federation, and who shows a (dubiously genuine) paternal concern towards her. In truth, her life serves him no further purpose than helping fulfill his own endgame (becoming Chancellor and, later on, seducing Anakin away from the Jedi). That he is the one responsible for deliberately using and endangering her echoes the common fairy tale theme of a father being complicit in, even directly responsible for, the betrayal of his daughter to a dangerous figure/situation – three of the most prominent being “Beauty and the Beast,” “Rapunzel,” and “Rumpelstiltskin,” all of which had fathers who gave up their daughters to preserve their own lives.[13]

There appears to be no universally defined cycle of steps for a fairy tale's plot, though the basic plot does seem to share some similarities with the Campbellian Hero's Journey. The first step in a fairy tale plot is the hero/heroine's threshold crossing, a thrust from the known into the unknown by the story's villain. Snow White’s stepmother is murderously jealous of her beauty and forces the girl into the woods; Cinderella loses her wealth when her greedy stepmother forces her into slavery. In this venture that the heroine is forced to fend for herself in an unknown realm, until she is able to confront and defeat the villain. In romantic fairy tales, which Padmé's story would certainly count as, this is usually the stage where the central character meets their love interest as well. This crossing is believed to represent the first major step of leaving childhood and entering the path to adulthood and sexual maturity.[14] The remaining basic steps include confronting the evil, defeating the evil, and – at least in more modern fairy tales – the happy resolution (which is definitely not required of myths, most of which end tragically), at which point the heroine's role as adult (be it queen, mother, or both) is firmly cemented.

Padmé's first shown threshold crossing is spurred by the invasion of Naboo. Knowing she cannot save her world if she is captured, she flees to Coruscant, and, when she realizes no help is coming from the Senate, stages a rebellion to retake her home. Along the way, she finds critical help from "magical" allies, in the form of the Jedi and, of course, Anakin – the one she will eventually marry. Anakin is a slave, not a literal prince, but in proper fairy tale tradition does fall in love with her on first sight (like Cinderella's prince, he recognizes her beauty even though she wears peasant garb). He also proves himself of worthy character to one day be a partner for her (as all good princes must do for the heroine to accept them15) by risking his life to help repair her ship and then helping save her world by defeating the "dragon" holding it captive, the Federation droid control ship. By the end of *Menace*, Padmé is not yet a woman, but is one step closer, having defeated the Federation and reclaimed her rightful throne, the smile she and Anakin share at the parade a reminder of the changes to come for them. *Menace* on its own actually has all the aforementioned basic elements of a fairy tale plot in some form or another and can be seen as an intact tale, a microcosm of the true transformation journey that lies ahead for Padmé – one whose resolution she won't live to see.

At the start of *Clones*, Padmé seems to have changed little in the ten years since *Menace*. In many ways she is still the same girl, submerging her personal life under that of her career of serving others. It's not unreasonable to guess she would've continued to if not for the intervention – again – of Palpatine, who initiates another threshold crossing for her where she will, again, be thrust from her normal life and cross paths with her "prince." He does so in a means to again further his own ends, in this case getting Padmé out of the way as his dominant opposition to creating a Republic army. He orders her to go into hiding from her would-be assassins on Naboo, with Anakin as her guard (perhaps Palpatine has a second agenda of testing Anakin's loyalties to the Jedi as well, sending him off alone with the woman he loves). Naboo, with its sparkling lakes, deep forests, and rolling green hills, is the opposite of Coruscant, teeming with life and beauty and seems itself right out of a fairy tale. Here, Padmé has already been stripped of her career persona, and what remains is the woman who has been submerged – sleeping – for so long under it, and who now does fall in love with Anakin. Over time she becomes more willing to express her femininity through increasingly revealing hairstyles and attire, eschewing her severe Senatorial style, which concealed her beauty. She *wants* Anakin to see her as a woman, not a formal Queen or Senator.

Padmé's union with Anakin, like with many fairy tale heroines, is not sealed until she herself is ready to accept him – accept her adulthood.16 The figure of the prince represents the heroine arriving at sexual maturity; in joining him, the heroine leaves childhood forever and enters a life where she has the possibility to have children of her own. (Their union, of course, results in the birth of Luke and Leia. By arranging the reunion of Padmé and Anakin for his own ends, Palpatine has – again, like many fairy tale villains – unwittingly already set in motion the cycle that will lead to his destruction.) Sometimes this transition is marked in fairy tales by the heroine experiencing a literal death and reawakening before they can meet their prince: this is said to represent the "death" of the virginal maiden the heroine once was, and the awakening of the new woman she has become.17 Padmé's own words in her love pledge state outright she has been "dying a little each day" since Anakin returned to her: it is no coincidence that when Padmé does freely declare her love, she and Anakin subsequently cross another threshold from a dark chamber into an area full of light shining on them. Nor is it coincidence this occurs on a world whose name is a variation of the word *genesis*: beginning, birth. The old Padmé has fallen away, and the new one that emerges into the arena after her declaration is a vibrant woman, suffused with life and spark. Like Snow White and Sleeping Beauty,

Padmé had been asleep – not due to any outwardly inflicted "curse," but one she had inflicted herself and that only she could choose to cure.

In *Revenge*, Padmé has reached the height of the feminine cycle, happily married and pregnant, certainly much transformed from the girl she started the prequels as. Though marriage and arriving at sexual maturity is a goal of the fairy tale, it is not itself *the* resolution. Before its heroine can have any truly happy resolution, it is still necessary for the great evil in a fairy tale to be confronted and overcome.[18] The trials of the Queen in *Rumpelstiltskin* did not end when she gave birth to her child, but when she saved that child from forces who threatened to take him from her. Rapunzel had to raise her twins for years alone in the wilderness before she got a happily-ever-after with her prince. To complete her journey, the heroine must face and overcome the evil threatening her and her family, thereby asserting and cementing her position as rightful queen/wife or mother. Likewise, marriage and motherhood alone do not guarantee Padmé a happy resolution. Unfortunately for her, confronting the great evil face-on is where she stumbles. Upon learning her husband has turned to the Dark Side, she does confront Anakin/Darth Vader, seeking to save him both from death at Obi-Wan's hands and Sidious's grip. She is not successful, but nor is her attempt completely in vain – though she dies and Anakin remains a slave to Sidious, she survives long enough to complete the ultimate feminine act, one that ensures the continuation of her journey regardless of her death: giving birth to their children.

The fairy tale journey of Padmé's story continues after her death, which follows a common fairy tale convention: a mother dying in childbirth. Snow White's mother dies in childbirth; Cinderella's dies early in her childhood.[19] Padmé likewise dies after giving birth and her twins are then hidden from the "witch," who would turn them to darkness or kill them. (Palpatine, in classic fairy tale villain tradition, at one point does seek to claim the heroine's child for himself[20], like the dwarf in *Rumpelstiltskin* – which in both cases leads to the villain's undoing.) In these cases of the mother dying early it often happens that the mother has left a gift from beyond the grave, which protects her child and can even be the means to defeat the villain. The German Cinderella, for example, did not receive the dress and shoes that enabled her to go to the Prince's ball and escape her wicked stepmother from a fairy godmother, but from a gift-giving tree growing over her mother's grave[21]; as protection when she leaves home the princess in *The Goose Girl* carries a napkin holding three drops of her mother's blood.[22] When Padmé speaks her final words about the good she believes is still in Anakin, a newborn Luke is by her side, and he unconsciously echoes those words more than twenty years later. Padmé passes her gifts of compassion and faith on to her son, the gifts that above all else enable Luke, as Padmé's avatar in Episodes IV through VI, to save Anakin and help destroy Palpatine in her stead. (Fairy tales are sometimes said to be stories about the bond between a mother and child[23], which does have truth in this case – while the relationship that directly brings about the "happy ending" of Anakin's redemption is the one between father and child, it is the connection between mother and child that sets the stage for the other relationship.)

Padmé succeeds at last in defeating the evil and completing her journey as woman, wife and mother, even if she is not there to see it. Then again, modern fairy tales all but demand a happy ending for their hero/heroine[24], and Anakin himself in his death was restored to his youth, so perhaps it's not outside the realm of speculation that Padmé *did* find her prince again in some hereafter.

Padmé is the walking Sleeping Beauty, her femininity asleep beneath a bristling, thorny wall until she is ready to awaken and meet her Prince. Even in her death she recalls a

brutal inverse of the tale – in her casket surrounded by flowers she appears asleep, but now nothing can wake her, and it was her prince who put her that way (though her clasping of Anakin's japor seems to hint she *is* somehow still waiting for him). She is Rapunzel, whose secret meetings with her Prince lead to suffering for them both – each cast out by the Witch into the wild to wander for years alone, until they are reunited and her love heals his grief-induced blindness. She is Beauty/Belle, whose sacrifice and unconditional love lead – indirectly – to a Beast redeeming himself from years of self-imposed torment.

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Star Wars is a Fantasy: A Critical Review
by Matthew Recker

When most people are asked to name their favorite work of science fiction a common answer is *Star Wars*. When asked to name the most popular work of science fiction, the answer is usually once again, *Star Wars*. The irony is that although the title itself suggests science fiction, the story itself is a fantasy. *Star Wars* even starts out with a typical fair tale opening: "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away." Drop "galaxy" and replace it with "land" and it's the opening to countless fairy tales and fantasy stories. *Star Wars* is a tale of a mysterious Force and special people who can control it like magic. It is also a tale of adventure and a quest. Despite the common belief, *Star Wars* is not science fiction, it is fantasy.

In traditional fantasy, magic or some other mystical aspect is present which makes the fantasy world distinctly different from the real world. In her rules of fantasy Holly Lisle states:

In a world with magic, magic is your "gimme" -- the one thing about which your reader will unquestioningly suspend disbelief...so if you really want to tell a story that uses faster-than-light spaceships, you need to drop the magic.

In a work of fantasy the reader is allowed to take things for granted, but the writer must be careful to not overstep the limitation of the gullibility of the reader. In *Star Wars*, the "gimme" is the Force. The audience has very little information on how the Force works, only that it is found within every living being, but only a few people can control and shape their will into the Force. The Force is magic only by a different name, but it has the same mysterious elements of magic, and it asks the audience to "suspend belief" for the short period of time it takes to view the movie.

If magic, or the Force, is the only "gimme" then a writer must not leave everything as a mystery and some things will be explained. This is where *Star Wars* seems like science fiction. In the movies the characters all have technology that is superior to our own. Scientists are not even sure that all of it is possible, but this is also built into Lisle's rules on fantasy:

If your magicians have been working successfully for more than a few years, they will have surely developed corollaries to the steam engine, the telephone, the television, the radio, the electric iron and the toaster, the automobile, computers, the electric guitar, and the flush commode. They should not still be farking around with turning straw into gold. They probably won't wear goofy pointed hats, either, though of course they can if you insist.

Most traditional fantasy is set in times long before any of the readers were born, in worlds far away. *Star Wars* is no exception, the only major difference is that their evolutionary clock has been set many times ahead of ours. The *Star Wars* galaxy has been united for many years. The Empire ruled the entire galaxy for a couple decades, but before the Empire the galaxy was united under the Old Republic which was in place for hundreds of years. Clearly this galaxy has been possessed of a high intellectual ability for thousands of years, in all that time they would have created things we could only dream about and it is foolhardy to expect them to not have developed a very advanced system of travel,

communication, and day-to-day life in all that time. Asking the audience to believe that would be harder than getting them to believe a system of magic exists.

Even though some of the technology is easily integrated into the story of *Star Wars* with current science and possible futuristic science fact, there are still the Jedi tools and devices which have the aura of mysticism about them. In the entire series, this is chiefly the lightsaber. The lightsaber is a blade made out of focused light similar to a laser, except this blade cuts through any and everything. The process for creating a lightsaber is not mentioned in the movies, but in Steve Perry's *Shadows of the Empire*, which is an interlude between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, the reader sees a Lucas-sanctioned book with Luke creating his own lightsaber. He learns that although the parts used for the lightsaber could be scrounged up by anybody, only a Jedi could properly assemble them. Also, a major part of piecing together a blade is meditation on the blade to fuse everything properly and make it work. So even though there is science behind it, ultimately the way it works is by the use of the Force; magic.

The prequel movies also have some Jedi devices not seen in the original trilogy. Some examples include the midichlorian device which measures a Jedi's midichlorian count, which *The Phantom Menace* seems to claim is the source of Jedi power. We also see Obi Wan's ship that seems to tie into his Force power by special headgear that he wears. Finally, we see a three-dimensional representation of the galaxy that is stored in a small orb. Whether these are truly Jedi devices that only work by the manipulation of the Force or just more *Star Wars* technology not used before remains to be seen. But the idea is that although much of the science and technology is explained, the mystery of the Force creeps into the technical side of *Star Wars*.

Another important aspect of the fantasy genre is the hero. The hero has some type of connection to the mysterious power in the fantasy world. Either they actively partake in it, or they try to flee from those who use it for ill. Luke Skywalker is the hero of *Star Wars*. Luke is not skilled with the Force, but he learns. Philip Martin says this about character creation in his rules of fantasy writing:

> *Make your hero an orphan. Harry Potter, Dorothy in Oz and Taran in Lloyd Alexander's Prydain series are all orphans...The purpose of all the orphans in the fantasy world is to allow young protagonists to venture out entirely on their own, to discover the limits of their powers, and to overcome trials without parents to hold them back.*

When making fantasy the creator only gets one "gimme" so he cannot give a child parents who would unabatedly let their child go traipsing off around the galaxy without their oversight. Their are ways around this, but most make a virtual orphan. Harry Potter is a true orphan, but he has family that raises him, though they could not care less about his well being, which is one way to make a virtual orphan; have the parents hate the child so much that the child leaves and they do not care and their hate in fact only serves to fuel the hero.

Luke, however, is a true orphan. At least the audience thinks he is until *The Empire Strikes Back*. Even then though, he is an orphan because his father is dead, the man known as Darth Vader only shares the body of Anakin Skywalker. As far as Luke knows, his parents are dead and have been all his life. He is raised by his Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru on Tatooine. He finds out that he could be a Jedi and fight against the evil of the galaxy, but his ties to home (even though they are not his true parents) and his dedication to his aunt and uncle force him to turn the offer down. He cannot leave them high and dry

and just go running around the galaxy. Lucas takes care of that by killing his aunt and uncle and freeing Luke up. Luke had always hated the desert world of Tatooine and now he was finally freed to leave and never look back so he takes Obi Wan up on his offer, thus starting his adventure.

The adventure is the excitement of *Star Wars*, it is the focal point of most fantasy and ultimately expresses the moral of the entire story. In his rules for fantasy Philip Martin states:

> *The Hero's Quest is a classic form of journey that pervades many fantasy stories. The hero leaves home, passes through a portal, has a series of trials and acquires wisdom, friends and magical powers, and then returns home, changed forever.*

Luke's journey is a "Hero's Quest" that changes him forever. He started out as a timid boy and when the story is over he is a strong, steadfast hero and savior of the galaxy. Through his trials against Darth Vader and the Emperor and his training with Yoda, Luke becomes a man, barely recognizable from when he started. His quest is to learn the ways of the Force and ultimately free the galaxy from the stranglehold of the cruel self-proclaimed Emperor Palpatine. The lesson learnt is that against adversity and hardship faith, love and good morals will triumph.

Luke's faith is not unwavering, though. When he confronts Lord Vader and Emperor Palpatine in *Return of the Jedi*, Luke succumbs to the temptation and briefly treads on the Dark Side of the Force. But as Philip Martin so eloquently states, "In the end, a heart of gold trumps all." Luke realizes he is using the Dark Side of the Force and he pulls himself back to the Light and is prepared to die. His love for his father prevents him from killing him and pulls Anakin Skywalker back to the Light as well. When Anakin wakes up and sees his son being tortured he kills the Emperor himself and the galaxy is saved. As with most fantasy the "heart of gold" wins against all evil, and Luke has that "heart of gold." Even though the end of *Harry Potter* is not known, most of the individual novels end with the pure heart of a child, Harry Potter, stopping incredibly evil forces. Harry is willing to sacrifice himself for his friends and that love of an innocent child is the key. The pure heart is a very common and widely used theme in fantasy.

The key to fantasy is the teaching of morals to adults and children alike. In her reflection on modern fantasy, Connie Rockman (a librarian) states:

> *One of the best ways for children to tackle the question of evil is through allegory and metaphor. Concepts that are too scary to contemplate in real life can be understood -- or at least considered -- through fantasy.*

Harry Potter seems to be teaching that heritage and lineage is not important. Destiny is not important. It is the choices made that define who someone is, not where he comes from or what he knows. Choices are key. In *Star Wars*, the main lesson taught is that people are evil, but people are also good. The two forces of good and evil are always struggling but goodness and purity always wins out. Faith and love are the most important and powerful forces, and can be wielded by anyone (that applies to *Harry Potter* as well).

In conclusion, *Star Wars* is one of the most recognizable works of popular culture and is often associated with science fiction. However, if the casual viewer digs a little deeper and examines the story of *Star Wars* he will see that though there is some hard and realistic science, the movie is a fantasy tale involving mysterious powers (i.e. the Force) and

heroes that must learn to control and harness these powers while they journey physically and metaphorically in search of their destiny. Even some of the technology is only explainable by the mysteries of the Force and thus *Star Wars* cannot truly be science fiction. The mysticism of Star Wars does not allow it to be science fiction.

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Obi-Wan Kenobi: The Crazy Old Wizard
by lazypadawan

"That old man is just a crazy wizard" -- Owen Lars, *Star Wars: A New Hope*

Obi-Wan Kenobi's character travels an interesting arc over the course of the saga, transforming from the virtuous knight portrayed in the prequel trilogy to a different archetype in Episodes IV-VI, the wizard. Even though Obi-Wan isn't the only wizard archetype in the saga (Yoda could also be characterized as a wizard, while Darth Sidious/Palpatine may be characterized as an evil wise guide or a sorcerer), he is the only one who evolved from a different archetype over the course of the story. And of all the wizards, he has the greatest influence on Luke Skywalker's journey.

For the most part, Obi-Wan serves as a mentor in both trilogies. Interestingly enough, he fits that role in a more traditional sense in the Imperial trilogy because of the greater age difference between Obi-Wan and Luke than between Obi-Wan and Anakin in the prequel trilogy. Mentors do not need to be old, but many of them in fiction are of advanced age. Greater age brings experience and with that, often comes wisdom. (It's not uncommon for wizards in fiction to be thousands of years old.) George Lucas modeled Obi-Wan in part after the elder swordmasters found in Japanese samurai tradition. He even considered casting Toshiro Mifune, who frequently appeared in Akira Kurosawa's samurai epics, in the part.

Even though he was a powerful Jedi Master and he once fought in the Clone Wars, age and years in exile made Obi-Wan "too old for this sort of thing," as he put it in *A New Hope*. It is no longer his role to be the hero in an adventure. It's his turn instead to pass on the values and traditions of the Jedi Order to Luke Skywalker, and to set him on his quest. Even though Obi-Wan does not practice "magic" in the usual fantasy sense, his knowledge of the Force and his abilities as a Jedi Master give him a supernatural power that differentiates him from other wise men or guides. For this reason, "Ben" Kenobi fits the wizard archetype.

The wizard is actually one type of helper a hero encounters. Joseph Campbell wrote in the chapter on Supernatural Aid in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* that the helper figure is usually female but "not infrequently, the supernatural helper is masculine in form. In fairy lore, it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith who appears to supply the amulets and advice the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher."[1]

The wizard serves several purposes. The first thing he does is seek out the hero for the quest. Merlin seeks out Arthur, who had been living in exile and was oblivious to his heritage and his destiny. The wizard Gandalf seeks out Frodo Baggins in the Shire at the beginning of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Allanon, the last Druid, comes to Shady Vale to seek out the last descendant of the Shannara king, Shea Ohmsford. In an interesting variation of tradition, Obi-Wan does not show up at the Lars homestead to take Luke away for Jedi training. Instead, it is Artoo's "escape" from the moisture farm that draws Luke away from home (Artoo of course was carrying Princess Leia's message for the Jedi Master). But the mysterious "hermit" arrives out of nowhere in time to save Luke from the Sand People, so perhaps Obi-Wan was indeed seeking out Luke without his knowledge after all.

The wizard is often connected with the hero's past. Merlin used his magic to disguise Uther Pendragon and deceive his slain enemy's wife, Queen Igraine, contributing to Arthur's conception. He was also the one who placed the boy in hiding when Arthur was an infant. Gandalf knew Frodo's uncle Bilbo Baggins from their adventures in *The Hobbit*. Obi-Wan knew both of Luke's parents -- he'd trained and practically raised Anakin, while he'd shared adventures alongside Padmé Amidala. Obi-Wan also took the newborn and orphaned Luke to Tatooine for safekeeping from the Sith.

The wizard gives the hero a talisman, reveals the hero's latent powers and/or his destiny, and entrusts him with the quest. In one version of Arthurian legend, Merlin has Arthur pull the sword Excalibur out of a stone, proving to all he is the rightful heir to England's throne. In another version, he brings Arthur to receive Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake.[2] Arthur has no magical powers of his own, but he is guided on his destiny to rule England by Merlin. Gandalf ensures the One Ring is given to Frodo. Again, Frodo has no powers of his own but the One Ring does and by its nature it transforms its possessor. Gandalf also joins the Fellowship in its quest. Allanon reveals to Shea Ohmsford that he possesses royal Elven blood and is able to wield Elven magic. More importantly, the lineage allows Shea to wield the magical Sword of Shannara. Obi-Wan gives Luke his talisman, Anakin's lightsaber, and reveals to Luke that he too has potential to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like his father. He encourages Luke to join him in rescuing Leia.

The wizard has his own agenda and often keeps secrets. In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf would vanish from time to time without elaborating to anyone where he'd been. Allanon rarely revealed everything to Shea, his brother, their friends, or to subsequent heroes in the story. They were often frustrated with Allanon; some of them even distrusted him. Obi-Wan kept the truth about Anakin/Vader from Luke and it's often debated whether he intended to have Luke unknowingly kill his own father. In any case, Obi-Wan did not think Luke was ready to handle the truth about his parentage and feared it would leave him vulnerable to Vader and the Emperor.

It is interesting to note an argument that "Obi-Wan and Yoda differ from the Wise Guide in traditional fairy tales in that their wisdom is limited: they disagree, they may misjudge. They are dismayed and predict disaster when Luke takes leave from his training to rescue his friends. But in fact Luke partially succeeds, and does not himself fall into the Dark Side as they feared."[3] This is perhaps a modern convention, where in the past a wise guide or wizard may not always be of impeccable character, but he was nevertheless always right. Both Obi-Wan and Yoda seem to have abandoned the prophecy of the Chosen One and both believed Anakin was lost forever. The events of *Return of the Jedi* proved them wrong.

Killing off the wizard is often a necessary plot device so that the hero learns to stand on his own. But this doesn't mean the wizard cannot make a return from the great beyond to guide and advise the hero when needed. Allanon dies in one of the *Shannara* novels, only to return as a spirit who is called upon from time to time for assistance. Gandalf dies in *Fellowship of the Ring*, only to return as Gandalf the White. Merlin does not precede Arthur into death, but he vanishes mysteriously. Thereafter he invisibly advises Arthur on occasion.[4] Obi-Wan sacrifices himself during a lightsaber battle with Darth Vader. Initially, he advises Luke in the form of a disembodied voice that apparently only Luke can hear. Then he later appears as an apparition, having fully mastered the technique of retaining his identity after death. He continues to advise and guide Luke during the rest of the saga.

The most important function the wizard serves however, is as protector and guide. "What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny."[5] Gandalf leads the Fellowship on its journey. Merlin "tells (King) Arthur of his destiny to unite the kingdom, and uses his magic and wisdom to help the young king."6 Obi-Wan "shields Luke from dangers along the journey"[7] at first, taking control of getting into Mos Eisley safely and finding a pilot in the cantina. At the beginning of their relationship, Obi-Wan saves Luke twice, once from the Sand People and again from rough characters in the cantina. It's Obi-Wan who negotiates with Han Solo to get passage to Alderaan. It's Obi-Wan who gives Luke his first Jedi lessons -- leading Luke into what Obi-Wan called "a larger world" -- and who comes up with the plan to escape the Death Star. It's at this point that Luke, left alone with his new companions, is strong enough to take his first steps as a hero by initiating the rescue of Princess Leia.

Obi-Wan may not have a floor-length beard, a pointed hat, and a magical staff, but he is in essence a wizard over the latter half of the saga. By serving as the wizard in the story, he not only makes it possible for Luke to claim his destiny but also makes it possible to save his old friend from the Dark Side.

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Buddhism and *Star Wars*
by Eli Williamson-Jones

Universal Saga

The story of the hero's journey, or mono myth, as it was called by Joseph Campbell, transcends race, economics, culture and religion. The psychologist and mythologist, Jonathan Young, has said that, “when enmeshed in a larger purpose, you are yourself, truly for the first time,” and this is why we identify with the heroes of a story.1 As a universal, this identification is sparked by the deepest longing within us that seek to be connected to something greater than the self. Theaters feed this part of us in a dark setting where a projector's light flickers on the screen much like the faces of our ancestors in the light of a campfire during story telling sessions.

One of the most memorable hero’s journey stories told in the 20th and 21st centuries is the *Star Wars* saga. This movie had panoramic appeal from the very beginning and drew diverse masses of people into theater-temples for a profoundly sacred experience. “The Force” (in *Star Wars*) was conceived as a common denominator to all religions -- primitive to modern. The idea of an ideological core to world religion was a premise in the writings of Joseph Campbell, who George Lucas called, “My Yoda”1 The most interesting aspect of the cultural phenomena of *Star Wars* was that, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Muslims found a spiritual language that could connect their tradition to a younger generation of religiously illiterate people. This is particularly true with Buddhists, where Lucas himself has admitted that *Star Wars* was heavily influenced by eastern thought.

Compassion

Frederick Brenion beautifully illustrates the connection between *Star Wars* and Buddhism in these excerpts from his internet article, "Jedi-Shinshu."

> ...it is when we first meet Yoda that we are struck by the similarities between him and the examples and teachings of many Zen-masters. Later in *Phantom Menace* we meet Padmé Amidala, whose name; Padmé is that of “Lotus” from the mantra “Om Mani Padme Hum,” and Amidala, a feminine form for the Buddha Amida, the central figure in Pure Land beliefs. But it is in *Attack of the Clones* that we receive the strongest signal yet of the centrality of Buddhist thought in the Jedi. In a discussion Padmé asks Anakin if Jedi are even allowed to "love." He says: "Attachment is forbidden. Possession is forbidden. Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is central to a Jedi’s life, so you might say we’re encouraged to love."

Much of Buddhist practice is devoted to discovering our attachments and getting rid of them. But of even more importance and really forming the basis or ability for ridding oneself of attachments is that of compassion. It is, as Anakin said, "central to a Jedi’s life." And it is central to that of the Bodhisattva life, and the life of a Buddha.2

The Present Moment

In the beginning of *Star Wars Episode I, The Phantom Menace*, we learn the Jedi Knight’s teachings of mindfulness of the Living Force is identical to the Buddhist teaching of mindfulness of the present moment. Jedi Master Qui-Gon instructs his student Obi-Wan to not center on his anxieties and to keep his concentration in the here and now where it belongs. Anticipation of the future is sometimes necessary but not at the expense of the moment. This is being mindful of the living Force. Only by touching the present moment deeply in the here and now, are we able to live fully. There is no life outside this present

moment in the past or the future. When asked why his monks were so peaceful and serene, the Buddha said, “They do not repent the past, nor do they brood for the future. They live in the present.”[3]

Interdependence

Besides mindfulness of the moment, the Jedi share the Buddhist perspective of interdependence. In his warning to the Gungans, Obi-Wan uses the argument that their fate is bound to their neighbors through the interconnected nature of a symbiotic circle. “What happens to one of you will affect the other.” This same argument is used in Buddhism to illustrate the relationship we all share with the world and our universe. The idea that we exist apart from the whole as a “separate self” inhibits our enlightenment or greater understanding of reality as it is. Becoming aware of symbiosis or interdependence will put us in accord with the, “right view” of things, an essential element of Buddha’s eight-fold path.

Right View

Coming into a more authentic relationship with reality will show us that, the “right view” of things isn’t necessarily dependent on what we perceive but on how we perceive it. We will find that the perceptions we hold from images of the world are often false. Buddhist teachings tell us that “if there is perception, there is deception.” This is echoed in Star Wars when Obi Wan trains his Jedi student to practice with his light saber with the blast shield down. He tells Luke, “Your eyes can deceive you, don’t trust them.” It is a false perspective of reality we create inside our minds that leads to unnecessary suffering.

Right Effort

Arriving at a more integral picture of reality can be achieved with sincerity and devotion. This is what constitutes “right effort” in Buddhism which also means consistent thoughts and actions taken towards a spiritual peace and freedom. Yoda repeats the same sentiment in *The Empire Strikes Back* as he trains a stubborn Luke Skywalker. “A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.”

Attachment

Most striking to Buddhism and *Star Wars* is the message of attachment being an instigator of suffering. It is attachment that will bring about Anakin’s downfall. In a *Time* magazine interview Lucas himself says: "He turns into Darth Vader because he gets attached to things. He can’t let go of his mother; he can’t let go of his girlfriend. He can’t let go of things. It makes you greedy. And when you’re greedy, you are on the path to the dark side, because you fear you’re going to lose things, that you’re not going to have the power you need."[2]

In *Revenge of the Sith*, Yoda instructs Anakin to “Let go of everything you fear to lose.” The Buddha taught, “All phenomena that are born, exist, and are subject to the influence of other phenomena; in other words, all phenomena that are composite, must abide by the law of impermanence and eventually cease to exist. Everything we cherish and hold dear today, we will have to let go of and be separated from in the future.”[3]

Violence

Drawing parallels between *Star Wars* and Buddhism will undoubtedly resonate with some, more than it will others. Yes we can find similarities between Buddhist philosophy and the teachings of the Jedi, but at a deeper level, are their perspectives compatible? *Star Wars* is after all a movie that revolves around violence and warfare. The teachings in Buddhism revolve around nonviolence while seeking an end to warfare. There are many Buddhists

who will argue that violence can't be motivated by compassion and so the Jedi aren't in accord with this central tenet.

The Hero's Journey

But if one will take a closer look at Buddhism and *Star Wars*, they will see that each ultimately concerns itself with the hero's journey. It was Buddha himself who stated in the *Dhamnapada*, "Though he should conquer a thousand men in the battlefield a thousand times, yet he, indeed, who would conquer himself is the greatest hero."4 This quote is perfectly personified in *Star Wars* through the character of Luke Skywalker, who finds himself trapped in the middle of duality -- a great inter-galactic and spiritual civil war. Like the path of the Buddha, Luke is compelled on his hero's journey to find a cessation to war and his suffering by conquering himself.

Light & Darkness

Duality as defined for this presentation is warfare. In *Star Wars* this warfare is sustained by two opposing entities, the Light and Dark Side of the Force. George Lucas has stated that these two sides are "...designed around compassion and greed. The issue of greed, of getting things and owning things and having things and not being able to let go of things, is the opposite of compassion-of not thinking of yourself all the time. These are the two sides -- the good force and the bad force. They're the simplest parts of a complex cosmic construction."5

When Luke is first drawn into this warfare, his most troubling question concerns his dilemma, "Is the Dark Side stronger than the Light?" "The father (Vader) reminds the son, (Luke) as if the devil were his higher self, that without (higher) consciousness, 'Your destiny lies with me, Skywalker'."1 Obi-Wan essentially tells Luke that, "Vader can never be turned. Those who embrace the Dark Side are forever lost. There is no redemption for such." Obi-Wan's views are like those who opposed the teaching in the Tannisho that Amida's merciful vow is much more for the evil person.2 In *Star Wars*, "the dark side represents an energy that we may regard as another form of suffering."3 "In *The Empire Strikes Back*, we see the back of Vader's head and know, 'Whatever monster Vader might be, this man had suffered, and suffered deeply'."2

It is in the fifth *Star Wars* movie that Luke undergoes rigorous Jedi training and comes face to face with his own "Dark Side." Yoda sends Luke into a cave where he confronts an image of Darth Vader and cuts off his head. "Darth Vader's signature black helmet falls to the ground...Luke is shocked by the sight of his own face inside the helmet. His wide-open eyes stare back in disbelief. This is no faceless storm trooper from an alien realm. Luke sees himself and must think, "I have met the enemy and he is me."1 Mary Henderson (author of *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth*) wrote, "Darth Vader is not an external evil presence but the shadow side of Luke himself."

Upon closer look at the guardians of peace and justice in the *Star Wars* saga, one can see that the Jedi also share a shadow side with Luke Skywalker. It is the Sith who are born from Jedi just like in the myth of Satan being born from God. "The dark side does not spring up out of nowhere...they (the Sith) are an offshoot of the Jedi themselves. The Sith are in fact in the Jedi and the Jedi are in the Sith. Count Dooku was not only a fallen Jedi but a former padawan to master Yoda. Anakin was a padawan to Obi-Wan before he turned into a Sith. In referring to the way the Jedi are too easily deceived, the movie *Attack of the Clones* is punctuated by the line, "Only a Jedi could do this." "When we peel back the mask of evil in our society and in the world, we will find our own face staring back at us."3

Luke's hero's journey eventually brings him inside the heart of duality and the eternal warfare raging within. Darth Vader wants Luke to kill the Emperor and the Emperor wants Luke to kill Darth Vader. Obi-Wan and Yoda want Luke to kill both the Emperor and Vader. It is through witnessing and conquering his shadow side and seeing the never-ending war raging on between the Light and Dark Side of the Force, that helps Luke see good and evil must be transcended if his hero's journey is ever to be complete. The means he uses to do this are the same means the Buddha taught over 2,000 years ago. We all understand that love without wisdom can create a kind-hearted fool like Jar Jar Binks, while intelligence without compassion can produce a heartless megalomaniac like the Emperor. Through the interdependence of intelligence and love we find wisdom and compassion.

The Lotus Rises

Like Luke, with wisdom and compassion, we "...cannot look upon the evil of Darth Vader and fail to see the goodness present in him. This does not mean we no longer feel anger or sorrow. Feelings rise and fall but we are no longer bound to them like Anakin in *Attack of the Clones* or *Revenge of the Sith*. Feelings arise and we are mindful and watch emotions with detachment and they cannot drive us into disastrous acts of slaughter."3

"Although hatred, anger, aggression and other mental formations of the dark side are unwholesome, if we are practicing the way that transcends the dark side, they can nonetheless be transformed into wholesome elements."3 This is expressed with the symbol of the lotus in Buddhism, which grows from the filth and the decaying matter of a swamp. *Star Wars* is ultimately an antiwar film and that Luke is a prophetic wisdom hero of peace. The universe is saved from the titans of death by a solitary youth who turns off his light saber and turns on light consciousness.1 "Luke's actions show us that ultimately the good side of the force is stronger than the dark side.

The good side is stronger because it includes the dark side.3 "While Luke Skywalker best exemplifies the qualities of wisdom and compassion in *Star Wars*, it is his father, Anakin who shows us the full range of what it is to be human...Anakin goes from sweet kid to an arrogant, temperamental young man, to a monster cloaked in the dark side. In his life, he loved people, at times he hated himself, he sought the approval of his teachers, he selflessly tried to help others, he made mistakes, and he intentionally committed crimes of ignorance and of wickedness. But in the end he finds freedom from the dark side. The lesson of Anakin's experience teaches us that everyone even the most wicked, has the seed of liberation in his heart."3

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